THE RAMBLES OF FANCY;

OR,

MORAL AND INTERESTING TALES.

CONTAINING,

THE LAPLANDER,
THE AMBITIOUS MOTHER,
LETTERS FROM—
LINDAMIRA TO OLIVIA,
MIRANDA TO ELVIRA,
FELICIA TO CECILIA,
THE AMERICAN INDIAN,
THE FATAL RESOLUTION,
THE CREOLE.

BY THE

AUTHOR of the ADVENTURES of the SIX PRINCESSES of BABYLON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MDCCLXXXVI.

THE

AMERICAN INDIAN.

IN one of the moſt fruitful provinces of America reſided Panama and Caſcarilla, two young Indians of uncommon beauty. Caſcarilla was tall, and exactly ſhaped: her complexion was of an ardent brown; and her eyes were mild and radiant as the lunar beam. Though a ſtranger to the refinements of art, love had cultivated and improved her manners. For Panama ſhe braided her treſſes, dark and gloſſy as the raven's jetty plumage; and attired herſelf in all the ſimple pride of her native ſoil. When health and exerciſe ſummoned

Panama to the chace, or when he threw the net to inſnare the finny tribe, it was Caſcarilla's delight to await his return, beneath the ample ſhade of a verdant palm; where ſhe provided the moſt grateful fruits for his refreſhment; the purple grape, wood-ſtrawberry, bluſhing grandilla, and delicious cocoa, (the hardy covering of which ſerved as a goblet to contain the cooling fluid of the neighbouring ſpring) overſpread the moſſy carpet. Panama returned her affection with equal ardour. 'The joys 'of the chace, my Caſcarilla,' he would frequently ſay, 'inſpire our In-'dian youth with courage and activity. 'To rouſe the fierce tiger, to combat 'with the bear, and to purſue the fleet 'danta as he paces the lowly vale and 'towering mountain, convey health to

'the

'the body, and pleaſure to the ſoul. 'Yet theſe delight not like Caſcarilla, 'more beauteous than the tulip-bearing 'laurel, more fragrant than the wild 'cinnamon!' Thus did the impaſſioned youth breathe the raptures of his ſoul:

While Caſcarilla's grateful thanks repay,
That gracious Power who, though the doubtful day,
Sav'd her Panama from a fearful doom,
And guards ſecurely to his peaceful home.

Thus calmly glided the hours, till the youth was ſummoned to the hoſtile field. He muſt no longer loiter beneath the ſmiles of his Caſcarilla; no longer celebrate, in the inglorious ſhades of eaſe, her artleſs charms: immeaſurable deſerts, burning ſands, mountains of ſnow, muſt now ſever them, and the ſoft notes of love be changed for the noiſy din of war. Caſcarilla, with tears,

beheld her lover equipped for the field; on his brazen breaſt-plate was painted the terrific maca *; a plume of ſcarlet feathers waved on his head, and at his ſide hung the deadly bow and arrow.

'Adieu, my Caſcarilla!' he ſaid. 'Though war calls me to the field, thy 'image ſhall be preſent with me: love 'ſhall give vigour to my arm, and 'ſhield my boſom from the envenomed 'dart of the enemy. Weep not, my fair; 'with triumph crowned Panama ſhall re-'turn, and lay the ſpoils of conqueſt at thy 'feet: the faireſt ſlaves ſhall bend beneath 'thy ſway, fraught with the treaſures of 'their native land; armlets of pearl,

* A hideous ſnake, the figure of which the Indians paint on their targets to expreſs their intrepidity. The bite of it is incurable; and, wherever it has once ſeized, it never relinquiſhes its hold.

'rich

'rich gems, and amber pendants, with 'ſtrings of bluſhing coral, to adorn thy 'hair!'

Having ſaid thus, he embraced her tenderly, and departed. Caſcarilla purſued him with her eyes, even till the war ſong died upon her ear: ſhe then returned diſconſolate to her cottage. Her joys were now fled; and days and nights revolved only to augment her ſorrows. Her treſſes were no more interwoven with the varied plumes of the airy inhabitants; ſhe joined no more in the ſprightly dance, nor delighted in the ſociety of the Indian nymphs. To wander forlorn among the mountains, or to aſcend a dreary rock, and extend her eye toward thoſe plains which retarded her dear Panama, was her only ſolace. 'When,' ſhe cried, 'ſhall the cheerleſs hours of

'abſence fly? When ſhall the clangour 'of war ceaſe, and Panama return to his 'Caſcarilla?—O glorious ſun!' ſhe ſaid, 'parent of light and life, whom we 'adore, guard thou my love; protect 'him from the cruel tomahawk, and de-'fend him from the hoſtile dart! Suffer 'not the ſpirit* of darkneſs to moleſt him; 'but let their thunderbolts and dire 'whirlwinds ſcatter his enemies.'

As Caſcarilla uttered theſe words, ſhe heard a violent exploſion in the air, accompanied by confuſed ſounds of voices. She immediately deſcended from the rock; and was proceeding to her habitation, when ſhe was alarmed at

* Many of the Indians believe that an evil ſpirit reigns throughout the univerſe, which ſends thunder-ſtorms, and all kind of miſchief, to mankind.

the ſight of a number of armed men. They were French ſoldiers, who had landed at a neighbouring province; and, having ſubdued it, had marched thither with the ſame hoſtile intention. The Indians at firſt made a ſtout reſiſtance: but the noiſe of the fire-arms ſtruck them with ſuch conſternation, that they fled precipitately to the mountains. Caſcarilla endeavoured likewiſe to make her eſcape; but, being obſerved by the commanding officer, was inſtantly ſurrounded by the ſoldiers, and made captive. When ſhe found that flight was rendered impoſſible, ſhe threw herſelf at their feet, and ſtrove by tears to move their compaſſion: but the commander was too much captivated by her charms to relinquiſh them. She was therefore conveyed to his tent, which was pitched in a wood

a wood at a ſhort diſtance from thence. The Indian maid, pierced by the moſt poignant grief, was no ſooner alone than ſhe threw herſelf on the ground in all the agonies of deſpair: 'Wretched Caſcarilla! ſaid ſhe, 'to whom canſt thou now ſue for 'protection? Who will have pity on thy 'youth? Who will ſtretch forth their arm 'in thy defence?—Oh, Panama, Pana-'ma! why haſt thou deſerted me? Behold, 'whilſt thou ſeekeſt glory in the field, 'thy country and thy love are deſpoiled 'at home!'

She was thus bewailing her unhappy fate, when the officer entered the tent. Davenant was a young ſoldier, not leſs elegant in his perſon than valiant in the field of battle. He was generous and noble in his diſpoſition, though too frequently led away by the violence of his paſſions;

paſſions; among which, an inordinate love of womankind was predominant. From the firſt moment Caſcarilla caught his eye, he became fired by her charms; nor did he expect the leaſt oppoſition to his deſires from an unenlightened Indian: he was therefore both ſurpriſed and diſappointed to find that, notwithſtanding his efforts to diſſipate her ſadneſs, and win her to compliance, tears, ſighs, and the moſt unconquerable diſdain, were the only returns to his love.

He grew, however, more enamoured with his fair captive, though he ſcorned to violate the laws of humanity, by exerting that power which the chance of war had given him over her: on the contrary, he had recourſe to the gentleſt means to ſoften her heart; he daily deviſed ſome new pleaſure to render her captivity

captivity leſs irkſome; and, that ſhe might not pine for that ſociety to which ſhe had been accuſtomed, he ſelected a number of ſprightly Indian girls to amuſe and to enliven her. Among theſe was one named Chili, who had formerly been Caſcarilla's inſeparable companion. This girl Davenant ſingled out to plead his paſſion, and to ſoften the obduracy of his miſtreſs; for, being totally unacquainted with her language, he had hitherto urged his love by ſigns and looks only.

'How can you,' ſaid Chili one day to her weeping friend, 'how can you, 'deareſt Caſcarilla, thus perverſely turn 'from that happineſs which awaits you? 'Are you not happier here, where every 'wiſh is gratified, and where pleaſure 'courts you in a thouſand forms, than

'roving

'roving through the woods unnoticed 'and unknown? How can you reſiſt 'the charming youth who lives but in 'your ſmiles? Can our Indians boaſt ſo 'fair an hue? Eyes like the ſtarry 'heaven, and bluſhes like the roſy 'dawn of day! Panama will never re-'turn; he has perhaps fallen in battle: 'or, ſhould he yet live, fate has ſevered 'him for ever from you.'—'Ceaſe, 'Chili, ceaſe!' replied Caſcarilla; 'my 'blood runs cold with horror at the 'thought. Unthinking girl! can theſe 'vain ſcenes of pleaſure thus intoxicate 'thy ſenſes? Turn, Oh, turn your eyes 'to our unpeopled plains; view our poor 'countrymen driven with their helpleſs 'families to ſeek that ſhelter among 'dreary mountains, which they were 'wont to find in their peaceful habita-

'tions!

'tions! Oh, Chili, reflect on theſe 'calamities; and then look with horror 'on the authors of them. Were I ca-'pable of renouncing my beloved 'Panama, I would ſuffer death rather 'than unite with theſe deſtroyers of our 'land!'

Caſcarilla had ſpent ſome months in captivity, when Davenant received orders to march with his regiment, in order to join other troops in the more northern part of America. He could not endure the thought of forſaking his beloved miſtreſs, whom he reſolved, therefore, to make the companion of his expedition.

This was a new ſource of grief to the fair Indian: ſhe had not hitherto been without hopes, faint as they were, of ſeeing Panama, ſhould he return; but now

now that ſoothing dream vaniſhed, and in idea ſhe already beheld herſelf in a diſtant land, ſurrounded by obſtacles which muſt for ever baffle the efforts of Panama to diſcover her: but lamentations were fruitleſs, for in a few days they entered upon their journey; and Caſcarilla, with weeping eyes, caſt a laſt ſad glance on her deſerted plains.

'Adieu, my native plains!' ſhe cried, 'which were wont to ſmile with peace 'and liberty: no more ſhall Caſcarilla 'range your towering hills and ſunny 'vales; no more ſhall echo repeat her 'ſongs, or lengthen the plaintive tale of 'Panama: yet may the kind reſponſive 'maid bear to the youth his Caſcarilla's 'woes; tell him, with weeping eyes, ſhe 'leaves your ſhades, and in her laſt 'adieu ſighed Panama!'

They travelled ſome weeks; during which time Davenant continued to urge his paſſion with unabated ardour; till finding, at length, that promiſes and entreaties were equally unavailing, he reſolved by threats to terrify the obdurate maid into compliance. Theſe, however, anſwered no other purpoſe than to inſpire her with the reſolution of making her eſcape.

This ſhe was determined to do, though totally unacquainted with the part in which they were travelling: but ſhe was reſolved to cope with every danger rather than break her faith to Panama. Accordingly ſhe awaited an opportunity favourable to her deſign, and eſcaped by night from the regiment, diſguiſed in the habit of a French ſoldier.

Having

Having travelled till break of day, ſhe perceived a number of Indian women aſſembled at the entrance of a wood. Caſcarilla, overjoyed to behold ſome of her own ſex, was making what ſpeed her wearied feet would permit her towards them; when the women, alarmed at her hoſtile appearance, put themſelves in a poſture of defence, directing their bows towards her. Caſcarilla inſtantly threw herſelf at their feet, and, declaring that ſhe was an unfortunate female Indian, lately eſcaped from captivity, implored their protection in the moſt pathetic manner. This explanation entirely diſarmed the Indians, and converted their hoſtilities into kindneſs: they ſet before her the fleſh of ſome wild fowl and fruits, and invited her at the ſame time to reſide among them. Caſcarilla

joyfully accepted the offer; and, having refreſhed herſelf, was conducted to the habitation of Potowac, an Indian woman, who had warmly entreated her to make one in her family.

Potowac was the mother of two children, Michi and Huoki. Huoki, her ſon, was now among thoſe Indians who were annually ſent by this nation * to make war upon the Cherokees; but Michi remained at home with her mother. This young Indian and Caſcarilla were almoſt of the ſame age, and poſſeſſed an aſtoniſhing ſimilarity of diſpoſition; ſo that friendſhip mutually took root in their boſoms. They were inſeparable companions; and the ſociety of the gentle

* The Mohawks, one of the five nations, which dwell on the ſouth ſide of the river St. Laurance.

Michi

Michi ſoothed, in ſome degree, that grief which invaded the ſoul of Caſcarilla; for, ſince her reſidence among theſe Indians, ſhe had heard that Panama had fallen in battle. At the return of evening, when the employments of the day were over, ſhe would frequently recline beneath an embowering cocoa, and thus warble her melancholy tale:

The faireſt cedar of the grove
Aroſe leſs beauteous than my love,
The pride of all our Indian youth
For valour, conſtancy, and truth.

His eyes were bright as morning dew,
His lips, the nopal's * crimſon hue;
His teeth, the ſilvery plume ſo white,
That wings the ſpotleſs bird † of night.

* The plant on which the cochineal is nouriſhed; its bloſſoms are of a beautiful red.

† The American owl, of ſo ſhining and delicate a white as ſcarce to be diſtinguiſhed from ſnow.

For me th' unerring lance he threw,
For me the ſtedfaſt bow he drew;
Chac'd the fleet roe thro' mead and wood,
Or lur'd the tenants of the flood.

Mine was the ſpoil—the trophies mine,
The choiceſt ſkins my cot to line;
While for the youth a wreath I wove,
With flowers new gathered from the grove.

But, ah! thoſe happy hours are fled;
I weep my dear Panama dead!
The clang of war his boſom fir'd;
He fought—was conquer'd—and expir'd!

Untomb'd, unſhelter'd, lo! he lies;
No maid to cloſe his faded eyes,
With flowers to deck his mournful bier,
Or greet his aſhes with a tear!

Thus ſung Caſcarilla; while the ſympathizing Michi, with tears, blended in her ſong of ſorrow.

Some months having paſſed, the Indians, with anxious boſoms, began to expect the return of their warlike youths; and

and the love-ſick nymphs caſt many a longing glance toward the ſurrounding plains, impatient for the youth they loved. At length the joyful heralds drew nigh to announce victory, and the army's approach to the ſkirts of the village; it being uncuſtomary for the victorious Indians to enter it till the day following that of their arrival: they then make a triumphant entry with the captives they have taken in battle. Potowac and Michi, however, who could not bear ſuſpenſe another tedious night, ſet out, with affectionate ſolicitude, for the army to meet their beloved Huoki; but, alas! in vain: the valiant youth had fallen a victim to the rage of war, and was left a mangled corſe upon the hoſtile plain. Potowac filled the air with her complaints: 'O Huoki! Huoki!' ſaid ſhe, 'art

'thou

'thou ſlain indeed! Wilt thou return 'no more to thy diſtreſſed mother? Thy 'form was like the mountain pine; 'ſtrength nerved thy arm; and on thy 'tongue dwelt truth and wiſdom. In 'the race thou waſt like the flying 'deer; in battle dauntleſs and intrepid. 'Yet the darts of thine enemy have 'prevailed againſt thee; the cruel to-'mahawk has levelled thee with the 'duſt. All my nights ſhall be ſpent in 'mourning; and the ſun ariſe only to 'renew my tears!' Michi was likewiſe agonized with grief for the untimely fate of her brother. But her ſorrow was quickly diverted by the preſence of a young Indian who graced the triumph of the conquerors. His air was dignified and intrepid, as the martial god; health gave luſtre to his eyes, and beauty

to

to his countenance: he ſeemed to bear his fetters with unconcern, and heard without emotion that, on the morrow perhaps, the moſt excruciating death awaited him.

It has, I believe, been obſerved, that violent paſſions frequently take the moſt precipitant turn. Thus it proved with Michi; for ſhe no ſooner beheld the charming captive, than the grief which her brother's death had occaſioned inſtantly gave place to love: the ſafety of the beloved youth became now her only care. She was ſenſible that the laws of her country allowed to thoſe who had loſt in battle a huſband, a ſon, or a brother, the power of demanding a priſoner, whom they uſually adopted in room of the deceaſed. Of this privilege Michi reſolved next morning, when the chiefs

chiefs were aſſembled, to avail herſelf. With this reſolution ſhe accompanied Potowac to their cottage; where, embracing Caſcarilla, ſhe diſcloſed to her the fond wiſhes of her heart. 'Ah! 'my friend,' ſaid ſhe, 'I ſhall no 'longer enjoy that ſerenity which has 'hitherto marked my hours; nor ſhall 'my repoſe be longer undiſturbed by 'care; ſince I have admitted that fatal 'paſſion into my breaſt which has poi-'ſoned the peace of my Caſcarilla!'— 'My beloved Michi,' replied her fair companion, 'indulge not a thought ſo 'melancholy. Love, my friend, is the 'gentleſt paſſion; it ſmooths the thorny 'paths of life; it exalts, it refines 'the ſoul. What though it has 'taught my tears to flow, and rent my 'heart with the ſigh of ſorrow, ſhall

'Michi's

'Michi's joys be thus o'ercaſt? No, 'my friend; undiſturbed by the tumult 'of war, ſome gentle youth ſhall poſ-'ſeſs thy charms; love ſhall crown thy 'peaceful manſion, and health and vir-'tue ſecure thy repoſe.'

After this Michi entered into a minute detail of the circumſtances which gave birth to her paſſion; and communicated her intention of demanding the captive youth.

The two friends then retired to reſt: but ſleep ſealed not the eyes of Michi; her ſoul hung on the lovely Indian, whoſe image was ſtill preſent to her imagination. She reflected on thoſe graces which nature had beſtowed upon his perſon, and chid the lingering hours till light returned, when ſhe might again behold him.

Morn

Morn had no ſooner unveiled her beauties, than the triumphant Indians entered their village. The dire tomahawk was borne before them, adorned with variegated plumes, in token of victory; and their priſoners, decorated with beads and other ornaments, graced the conqueſt.

Michi repaired with eagerneſs to behold again the godlike youth; while Caſcarilla remained at home to comfort Potowac, who ſtill mourned for the loſs of her ſon. She did not, however, long indulge herſelf in the pleaſing contemplation of him, but haſtened to the ſachems and chief warriors, who preſide over the military affairs of the Indians, and demanded the captive ſtranger as a recompence for the loſs of her brother Huoki. This requeſt was immediately complied with; and

and the youth, being unbound, was conducted to the habitation of Potowac. Caſcarilla, at their entrance, was making fiſhing-rods; and, being intent on her employment, did not at firſt perceive the ſtranger. But with what various emotions was her ſoul agitated, when ſhe diſcovered him to be her loſt and lamented Panama. They beheld each other for ſome moments with ſilent aſtoniſhment, ſcarcely believing the evidence of their ſenſes. But ſoon finding the extatic dream to be real, they flew into each other's arms in all thoſe raptures which they only can feel who have experienced the pangs of deſponding abſence.

'O my Caſcarilla!' ſaid Panama, 'let me claſp thee, cloſe as the fond

'bejucos * claſps the ſheltering bark. 'How haſt thou ſurvived the dreadful 'ſlaughter which has overſpread our 'wretched country? But it is enough! 'I hear the muſic of thy voice, ſweeter 'than the rock-bird's ſong: I gaze en-'raptured on thy beauties, and trem-'bling preſs them to my beating bo-'ſom.'

Caſcarilla returned the careſſes of her lover with equal ardour, till a tear, on the cheek of Michi, gave a different turn to her thoughts. Diſengaging herſelf, therefore, from Panama's embraces, ſhe made ſigns for him to follow her into a ſolitary grove of cocoa, where ſhe ſpoke to him in the following manner.

* A kind of woody cordage, which grows in ſome parts of America, and clings to the bark of trees.

'Many

'Many have been my ſorrows ſince
'thoſe happy hours we ſpent beneath
'our native ſhades. Our plains, my
'Panama, are no longer crowned with
'peace; our countrymen no more look
'gay with health and eaſe, but bend
'beneath the weight of tyranny and
'oppreſſion. I was made captive: the
'haughty victor ſtrove to buy my love
'with coſtly gifts, and to allure me
'with intoxicating pleaſures: but I found
'means to rid myſelf of his hateful
'importunity, by taking ſhelter among
'theſe friendly people. Oh, Panama!
'in Potowac I have found a mother;
'in the gentle Michi a tender friend
'and ſiſter: but, above all, to their
'kindneſs do I owe the life of my Panama.
'How can we recompenſe ſuch good-
'neſs, ſuch unbounded goodneſs? Mi-

'chi, my Panama, loves you with the 'tendereſt affection; without you ſhe 'will droop and wither like the violet 'before the ſun. Shall we then plant 'thorns in thoſe lenient boſoms which 'have ſuccoured and protected us? No, 'my Panama, let us not return their 'kindneſs by ingratitude: give to Mi-'chi that love which was once your 'Caſcarilla's due. Heaven knows with 'what reluctance I reſign you! The 'ſable delights not ſo much in the moun-'tain, nor the beaver in the lake, as Caſ-'carilla in her Panama: yet will ſhe not 'wound the peace of Michi!' Theſe words ſtruck cold horror through the ſoul of the intrepid Indian: 'O my 'Caſcarilla!' he ſaid, 'how haſt thou 'unmanned me! Do we meet to part 'thus? Can I leave thee? No, my

'fair,

'fair, let us die together; let us die 'rather than bear worſe than death, 'ſeparation!'—'How!' ſaid Caſcarilla, 'can this be the valiant Panama? Are 'not the pleaſures of a virtuous ſelf-'denial preferable to thoſe of love, im-'bittered by ingratitude?'—'Noble and 'generous Caſcarilla!' replied the youth, 'how haſt thou rouſed my ſleeping vir-'tue? I bluſh to think that I have been 'thus ſurpaſſed in that fortitude which 'ſhould mark the Indian warrior! But, 'alas! it is more difficult to ſubdue 'our affections, than with a ſingle 'arm to combat millions. I ſubmit, 'my Caſcarilla; your ſuperior virtue 'has conquered. Lead on, my fair; 'lead to your friend; that, by ſacri-'ficing love to honour, I may ren-'der myſelf worthy of enjoying you

'beyond thoſe happy mountains, where

"No fiends torment, no Chriſtians thirſt
"for gold."

This affecting ſcene was concluded with a laſt tender embrace;

——"Some natural tears they dropt,
"But wip'd them ſoon."

Caſcarilla now conducted her lover back to Michi; and, embracing her, ſhe ſaid, 'Behold, my friend, the happy 'youth who poſſeſſes thy affections! Pa-'nama, my Michi, will return thy love 'with that ardour it ſo juſtly merits: he 'will devote to you that life which you 'have given; protect you by his va-'lour; ſoothe you by his tenderneſs; 'and be to Michi what once he was 'to Caſcarilla.' She then took their hands; and, uniting them, lifted up her eyes

eyes to heaven, and implored that the ſpirits of darkneſs might not be permitted to ſow diſcord betwixt them; but that uninterrupted peace and happineſs might attend them through life.

'Is it poſſible,' ſaid the aſtoniſhed Michi, 'that my friend can thus calmly 'relinquiſh her Panama? or can ſhe 'imagine that Michi would prefer her 'own happineſs to that of her Caſcarilla? 'No! were I thus to violate our friend-'ſhip, thy injured ſpirit would be ever 'preſent to my imagination, and purſue 'me, even to thoſe plains where we ex-'pect eternal reſt.'—'Deareſt Michi,' returned the generous maid, 'is not 'friendſhip the pureſt of all paſſions? Do 'not our Indian youth celebrate it in their 'ſongs, and hold it as the moſt ſacred of

'human

'human engagements? Do they not 'cement it by bonds, which even death 'itſelf cannot diſſolve? And ſhall not 'Caſcárilla make this ſacrifice to her 'beloved Michi?'—'No,' replied Michi; 'that ſacrifice be mine: my love 'was a ſudden guſt of paſſion only, 'which will vaniſh at the powerful 'touch of friendſhip.'

This tender conteſt laſted ſome time, each eager to ſacrifice her own paſſion to that of her friend; till Michi at length concluded with the following words: 'Ceaſe, 'Caſcarilla,' ſaid ſhe, 'ceaſe to urge 'me further; ſince I ſwear by the ſa-'cred Calumet, an oath which we all 'tremble to violate, that Michi will 'never become the wife of Panama!' Michi having thus prevailed, nothing now impeded the union of the faithful pair.

pair. Their marriage was celebrated with great feſtivity: and the friendſhip of Michi and Caſcarilla is recorded in the Indian ſongs even to the preſent day.

THE

THE

FATAL RESOLUTION.

ABSORBED in penſive ſorrow, Charles Mordant followed the corpſe of an affectionate wife into the ſilent receptacle of death. Her laſt requeſt was, that her remains might be depoſited in the place of her nativity: in compliance with which, he had accompanied her bier from the ſouth of France to a ſmall village in the weſt of England.

It was evening when they entered the venerable edifice; and the awful ſilence, which was interrupted only by the ſolemn dirge, contributed to raiſe in the ſoul a ſeries of reflections on the weakneſs and inſta-

inſtability of human grandeur. The duſky pile, which ſeemed to nod over the remains of thoſe it contained, and ſome remnants of antiquity which the remorſeleſs hand of Time had but half deſtroyed, forcibly told us that all on earth is vanity.

When the laſt obſequies were performed, and the rapacious grave had received the mortal part of its new poſſeſſor, Mordant returned home with the curate of the village, with whom, ſince his arrival, he had contracted an intimacy.

Mr. Villers was in the meridian of life; and though he poſſeſſed learning and talents which few could equal, none excel, theſe were the leaſt of his endowments. Virtue and goodneſs ſhone from him with perfect and undiminiſhed luſtre;

luſtre. A ſmall curacy of twenty pounds per annum could by no means equal his deſerts. But, alas! how ſeldom is merit rewarded! To ſoften his cares, Heaven had beſtowed on him a daughter, in whom his whole ſum of earthly bliſs was centered: he loved her, not in blind obedience to the dictates of nature, but with an eſteem founded on the firm baſis of applauding reaſon. The heart of Conſtantia was a tablet on which Heaven had written its own attributes, benevolence and humanity: her countenance was arrayed in the ſmiles of innocence; and her ſilken treſſes ſhone beneath the ſimple village coif, or wantoned on her boſom in the favourite luxuriance of nature. Her form was elegant; and in her manners ſhe preſerved the happy medium between re-

ſerve

ſerve and familiarity. The knowledge which the ſire had gained from experience was imparted to his lovely daughter with the mildeſt aſpect of paternal goodneſs; and their reciprocal intercourſe of affection rendered the day light-winged and pleaſant. The earlieſt breath of morn wafted their thankſgivings to that Supreme Power which ordained their happineſs; and the eye of the declining ſun beheld them again bent in adoration. Such was the amiable Villers; ſuch was his charming daughter. The houſe in which they reſided was ſituated on the banks of a ruſh-bordered ſtream: it diſplayed no elegance of form; the roof was thatched with the yellow bounties of autumn; and jeſſamine, which Conſtantia had taught to expand before the Gothic caſements, ſerved to render the

retreat cool and fragrant. To this peaceful abode of virtue Villers introduced Mordant: he was no leſs ſurpriſed than charmed to find in Conſtantia that grace and elegance which he had ever conſidered could be acquired only by an early introduction into polite life: neither could he forbear expreſſing his admiration at that unaffected air of cheerfulneſs and content which diffuſed itſelf throughout their actions, ſince fortune had not placed them in that ſphere of life to which their virtues and accompliſhments ſeemed ſo juſtly entitled. 'Happineſs, 'my friend,' ſaid Villers, 'offers itſelf 'every where: it is, alas! though, too 'common for man to eſtimate it ac-'cording to his own caprice and judg-'ment: the firſt makes it to conſiſt in 'gratifying the paſſions; and the ſe-

'cond

'cond in ſubduing them. The ambi-
'tious man beholds the richeſt gifts of
'fortune with indifference, and ſighs for
'that falſe glory with which his fond
'imaginations have been deluded. The
'miſer, inſenſible to the charms of
'greatneſs, laughs at the empty voice
'of fame, and gazes with voluptuous
'rapacity on his loaded coffers. But
'theſe, my friend, are vain ideas:
'happineſs erects her dome in the ſoul,
'on the baſis of religion and virtue.
'The ſtorms of fate may rage, and miſ-
'fortunes may ſurround the building;
'yet it will ſtand the ſhock firm and
'unſhaken.' Mordant felt the weight of this argument; but he was ſtill aſto-niſhed to think how it was poſſible for talents like thoſe which Villers poſſeſſed,

and beauty like Conſtantia's, ſo long to remain in obſcurity.

'It ſeems to excite your admiration,' ſaid Villers, 'that while the generality 'of mankind are purſuing wealth and 'honours, I, regardleſs of thoſe phantoms, 'find peace and content in this philoſo-'phic retirement. My ideas, like 'yours,' continued he, 'were once 'different: the world appeared to me 'an elyſium of bliſs, where pleaſure 'reigned with unceaſing ſmiles; I graſp-'ed at her illuſive form; but miſ-'fortune checked the impetuoſity of 'deſire, and reaſon pointed out the ſe-'queſtered path of life as to happineſs. 'Being the ſon of a gentleman of illuſ-'trious anceſtors, and liberal fortune, I 'was deſtined from my infancy for the 'order of our holy religion. My father

'was

'was the patron of a conſiderable living,
'the incumbent of which dying, during
'my minority, was ſucceeded by a gen-
'tleman who promiſed to reſign it to me
'as ſoon as I had completed my academi-
'cal ſtudies. During my reſidence at
'the univerſity, I diſcovered one morn-
'ing, at ſome diſtance from the city,
'the door of a ſmall cottage, ſur-
'rounded by four or five men, who by
'their appearance I concluded were
'officers of juſtice. "Alas!" ſaid I
'to myſelf, "this ſhould be the retreat
"of rural quiet; from theſe tranquil
"ſcenes of nature diſcord and oppreſ-
"ſion ſhould be far remote: but miſ-
"fortune, like the untimely ſcythe of
"the mower, levels alike the blooming
"flower and the poiſonous weed."
'When I approached "theſe ſons of pub-

"lick rapine," I underſtood that they
were waiting, in obedience to the rigour
of the law, to ſeize upon the peaceful
inhabitant of the cottage. The door
was at this inſtant opened by a young
woman, beautiful in my opinion beyond
expreſſion: though her charms, like the
"dewy ſtar of evening, ſhone in tears."
The remorſeleſs harbingers of woe had
no ſooner gained entrance than one of
them was proceeding up a narrow ſtair-
caſe; when the lovely girl, in all the
ſilent eloquence of grief, drew aſide a
curtain which partitioned off a part of
the room, and diſcovered the corpſe of
the old man, whom, with all the relent-
leſs ſeverity of law, they were purſuing.
This unexpected ſpectacle of grief melt-
ed even the flinty hearts of thoſe daily

familiarized

'familiarized to ſcenes of miſery. I was 'loſt for ſome moments in ſympathetic 'ſorrow; but collected myſelf, however, 'ſufficiently to inquire into their demand; 'and, from the ſmallneſs of the ſum, ex- 'perienced the pleaſure of relieving un- 'merited diſtreſs. My next care was to 'conſole the fair mourner, who had fallen 'in an agony of grief on the corpſe of 'her father; in which I had the happineſs 'of ſo far ſucceeding, that, in a ſhort 'time, ſhe was enabled to recite to me 'her unfortunate ſtory.'

MY poor father, (ſaid ſhe) was a tradeſman of no inconſiderable credit; till too unbounded a confidence in others ſo involved him in debt, that he

he was conſtrained to ſurrender the whole of his effects to avoid impriſonment.

My mother was ſo afflicted with this calamity, that ſhe died ſoon after of a broken heart.

My father, overwhelmed with grief, and finding all hopes of retrieving his affairs fruitleſs, retired with me to this cottage, where by daily labour he ſupplied us with the neceſſaries of life: a toil, indeed, from which his declining years ſhould have been exempt. At his return in the evening it was my delight to attend him, to lead him to the groves, to gather the wood-nut, and the bluſhing apple for him, and to repleniſh a cup from the cooling ſtream to refreſh him. Thus chearful and content, by health

and

and virtue, five years ſtole on us unheeded.

My father had not lived an unintereſted or improvident ſpectator of human life: from misfortune he had acquired experience and fortitude; and with theſe it was his conſtant care to impreſs my infant mind, teaching me to ſubmit with patience to the diſpenſations of Providence. 'Man,' he would often ſay, 'uncorrected by ad-'verſity, would ſoon degenerate into 'vice and folly: Pride would guide the 'reins of Proſperity, and the exulting 'heart forget the ſocial duties of mild 'humanity.' Excuſe me, Sir, (ſaid ſhe) for having thus treſpaſſed on your time; I will now reſume the melancholy tale, and haſten to the concluſion of my ſorrows.

It

It is now three months ſince I perceived my father's ſpirits gradually decreaſe: I often tried, but in vain, to diſcover the cauſe of his dejection; till, one day, on returning from the field, he told me, that the week before he had accidentally pierced his ſide with his ſickle; and that, fearful of alarming me, he had imprudently concealed it, till he was apprehenſive of danger from the wound.

When the ſurgeon ſaw him, he betrayed but too evidently, by his looks, the moſt alarming ſigns of danger; but conſoled me with the hopes of his recovery, for which I ſo ardently wiſhed: but, alas! he languiſhed only ſix weeks before he expired. Oh! Sir, imagine what I ſuffered to behold the dear author of my exiſtence waſting by pain and

and diſeaſe; and myſelf incapable of procuring for him the common comforts of life! The ſource of induſtry, dependant on the labour of his hands, was now dried up; he could now no longer guide the plough, nor wield the ſcythe; nor ſow the fruitful grain in the prolific boſom of the earth: his ſpirits drooped, and his frame decayed. During this interval of diſtreſs, we received a viſit from the perſon of whom we rented our cottage: he was, in appearance, ſenſibly touched with our misfortunes; and on his departure attempted to ſlip into my father's hand a bank-note of twenty pounds. This, notwithſtanding our preſent exigencies, he refuſed to accept, being too well acquainted with what mean and intereſted motives the

greater

greater part of mankind are actuated; and dreaded leſt an obligation of this kind, however acceptable, might one day furniſh a pretext for an ungenerous attempt on my youth and inexperience.

But however cautious, he was not ſuſpicious; and, at the earneſt ſolicitations of our imaginary benefactor, conſented to accept his liberal offer, on condition that he would take a bond in return, at once inveſting him with full power over our ſmall effects.

The ſingular generoſity of our benefactor gave him free acceſs to us; he was a daily viſitant, and ſympathiſed with us in our diſtreſſes: but what words can paint my horror, indignation, and aſtoniſhment, when I diſcovered

diſcovered, that, under the ſpecious ſemblance of friendſhip, he concealed the baſeſt, the moſt ungenerous deſigns, againſt my honour!

Unwilling, however, to augment my father's ſorrows, by diſcloſing to him the cruel inſult I had received, I endeavoured to throw a veil over it; but this, alas! ſoon proved impoſſible, for his ſolicitations proving ineffectual, the villain threw off all diſguiſe, and left to my aged ſire only the painful alternative either of immediate ruin, or reſigning me to his licentious wiſhes. My father, enfeebled as his ſpirits were, treated his baſe propoſals with the contempt and indignation they ſo juſtly deſerved: 'Let him, my child,' he ſaid, 'ſtrip us of our little all, and deprive

'us of every human intercourſe; he 'cannot, ſhall not, deſpoil us of our 'virtue: without it, we ſhould indeed 'be naked, though cloathed in pur-'ple robes; and deſtitute even in the 'palaces of royalty.' Two days after I perceived an alarming change in his diſorder; and, as I ſat laſt night ſupporting his languid head, he took me by the hand, and tenderly preſſing it, he ſaid, 'I perceive, my dear 'Elma, that the hand of death is al-'ready heavy upon me; I ſhall not 'be permitted long to watch your 'ſteps with paternal ſolicitude, nor 'to guard your youthful innocence: to 'the protection of God, my child, the beſt 'of Fathers, I recommend you. Ceaſe 'not daily to ſupplicate his divine 'protection; he will ſhield you from the

'ſnares

'ſnares of the wicked, and ſtrengthen
'you powerfully in the hour of tempta-
'tion. "Remember, my daughter, that
"you were made man's reaſonable
"companion, not the ſlave of his paſ-
"ſions and appetite:" let this reflection
'teach you to riſe ſuperior to the arts
'of ſeduction, and to nauſeate the in-
'toxicating draught of flattery; which,
'while it infuſes poiſon into the veins,
'is ſtill pleaſant to the taſte. The
'path of life preſcribed you, my
'daughter, is thorny, full of trouble
'and temptations; but theſe, if en-
'dured with patience, and ſurmounted
'with fortitude, will reflect an addi-
'tional luſtre on your crown of im-
'mortality. Endeavour, my child, to
'calm your grief for me: I aſk you
'not totally to ſuppreſs it; I am ſen-

'ſible that nature will have her tri-
'bute; but, immoderate ſorrow "ſwells
"into a fault:" it ſeems to accuſe an
'all-merciful God of ſeverity towards
'his creatures.

'Death, my Elma, cloſes the ſcene of
'human woe. To the wretch only whom
'guilt has ſtained, his ſhaft comes en-
'venomed.' He would have proceeded, but his voice faltered—ſtopped—and, without a groan, he expired on my boſom.

Here the lovely girl concluded the narrative of her woes; and ſtrove to ſuppreſs her tears, in order to pour forth her gratitude for my timely aſſiſtance; though, in her conduct towards me, ſhe appeared timid and cautious, having ſo recently experienced the perfidy of man. I endeavoured, however, to diſpel her

fears

fears by the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of my honour, and gave immediate orders for the interment of her father. This being over, I propoſed that ſhe ſhould change her reſidence, not doubting but that ſhe wiſhed to abandon the roof of one whoſe ill treatment ſhe had ſo fatally experienced.

She joyfully aſſented to my propoſal; at the ſame time declaring her intentions of endeavouring to ſupport herſelf by needle work. Having placed her in a retired lodging, I had the opportunity of ſeeing her every day; and the elegance and purity which I diſcovered in her mind perfected the conqueſt her artleſs beauties firſt began. I loved her with that ardour which generally attends the firſt ſallies of a youthful paſſion; and, regardleſs of future conſequences, made

her mine by the indiſſoluble ties of marriage.

But, convinced that the impetuoſity of youth would not eaſily agree with the frigid rules of cautious age, I thought it expedient, for the preſent, to conceal our marriage. The annual allowance I received ſerved, with economy, to keep want a ſtranger to us; and love left no void in our boſoms for ambition. On the birth of Conſtantia, however, I reſolved to diſcloſe my engagements to my father: but while I was debating with myſelf in what manner to reveal the ſecret, I received a letter from him, which both ſhocked and ſurprized me. It was couched in the moſt violent terms of diſpleaſure; acquainting me that he had received intelligence of my rebellious conduct, and entirely cut me off from all future

future filial expectancies. I ſoon diſcovered to whom I was indebted for a conſiderable part of his implacable reſentment. The perſon to whom he had preſented the living before mentioned, obtained information of my union, which he inſtantly communicated to my father, with ſuch exaggerations as appeared likely to promote his intereſted and ſordid views. Theſe were to ingratiate himſelf with my father, and by working on his natural violence of diſpoſition, effectually to deprive me of his affections; in order to palliate, in ſome degree, his iniquitous conduct in not reſigning the living when I ſhould be of age, which he held only during my minority.

The hours which eaſe and contentment had fledged, now alas! loſt their

their roſy pinions; Poverty, with all her train of attendant ills, forced us to ſubmit to her rigid laws. I repeatedly repreſented to my father, in the moſt affecting manner I was able, our miſerable ſituation; but could obtain no redreſs from him. At length, however, tired out with ſolicitations, he told me, that if I would conſent to a total ſeparation from my dear Elma, it might perhaps ſo far moderate the rigour of his reſentment as to prevail with him not totally to deſert me. Elma uſed the moſt pathetic arguments to induce me to comply with theſe hard conditions: 'Regain, my dear Lyſander,' ſhe ſaid, 'once 'more the path of filial duty, pointed 'out to you by heaven itſelf: for my 'ſake you have too long deviated from 'it; do not, therefore, let a miſtaken

'fondneſs

'fondneſs miſguide you farther. Is it 'expedient that, to preſerve one, three 'ſhould periſh? No, my dear huſband, 'relinquiſh me; leave me to that God 'who, while he ſcourges, pours into the 'wound the healing balm.'

Notwithſtanding theſe arguments, with many more to the ſame purpoſe, I preferred poverty to the moſt ſplendid affluence purchaſed by the horrors of ſeparation; although I every day experienced the heart-breaking torture of beholding thoſe for whom I would have ſacrificed my exiſtence, deprived of the common neceſſaries to ſupport life. Elma, with cheerful ſerenity, bore our misfortunes; till four years having elapſed, I perceived a deſponding gloom gradually ſteal upon her. One evening, particularly, I obſerved her caſt a look of unuſual

uſual tenderneſs on our little Conſtantia; ſhe ſighed; and, embracing her with inexpreſſible ardour, turned from me to conceal thoſe feelings with which her frame was too viſibly agonized. I kiſſed off the tears which bedewed her cheek, and intermingled mine with them: 'Heaven, my Elma,' I ſaid, 'will not leave our conſtancy 'unrewarded; it will ſcatter even 'this our mortal path with life's 'faireſt flowers. From the retroſpect 'of our own, we ſhall learn to pity 'another's woes; and, by alleviating 'them, render our happineſs the 'more complete. Remember, my love, 'that,

——"Sweet are the uſes of adverſity,
"Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
"Wears yet the precious jewel in its head."

She

She heard me with ſilent attention, and then replied, 'Happineſs reſides 'not here; heaven is her manſion, 'and death the only portal at which 'we can gain acceſs to her.' Then, deep ſighing, ſhe aroſe, and we retired to reſt.

In the morning I awoke: but, oh! to what inexpreſſible wretchedneſs! Elma, my beloved wife, had left me while I ſlept; left me, alas! to return no more. On the table I found the following billet——

TO LYSANDER VILLERS.

UNABLE longer to ſupport the thought, that I am the fatal inſtrument by which heaven chaſtiſes you,

you, I am reſolved to take that ſtep which reaſon has ſo frequently urged. I will no longer, dear Lyſander, impede your riſing fortunes; no longer ſhall you, for my ſake, entail on you the paternal curſe. Fly therefore inſtantly to your father, and aſſure him that the object of his diſpleaſure no longer now remains an obſtacle to his bounty: but tell him, at the ſame time, that I was not totally unworthy your affection; tell him, that, to ſhield you from the chilling blaſt of poverty, I renounce the tender claims of mother and of wife, and depart a voluntary exile. Farewel, my beloved huſband! To your care I leave our infant Conſtantia. O may ſhe emulate her father's virtues; may her

her young mind, my Villers, be fired by your virtuous example; and may ſhe live to repay you, by filial love and duty, the tender, the anxious hours, of parental ſolicitude!

ELMA.

I was almoſt diſtracted on peruſing this billet; a thouſand ways how to regain her crowded in an inſtant on my imagination: but, alas! on cool reflection, I found that I had not the leaſt clue to trace her by. I roved four months, however, from one ſpot to another with the vain hope of diſcovering her; when, finding that all my endeavours proved ineffectual, I went to my father, and informed him of the irreparable loſs I had ſuſtained: nor could I forbear, at the ſame time,

caſting ſome reflections, perhaps too ſevere, on his obduracy. This conduct ſo augmented the breach betwixt us, that it was not till ſome time after he was prevailed upon, at the earneſt importunity of ſome friends, to ſettle on me annually the ſmall ſum of thirty pounds. This would have been but a ſcanty pittance to ſupport Conſtantia and myſelf, had I not fortunately procured the curacy I now hold. Heaven has likewiſe raiſed us an unknown friend; for we have at different times received ſums to a conſiderable amount, without being able to diſcover the leaſt traces of our kind benefactor.

Here Villers concluded; and night having long gloried in her ſable charms, Mordant retired to the inn where he then reſided.

ſided. The amiable curate and his lovely daughter were, however, ſtill preſent to his imagination: he revered Villers, and felt for Conſtantia the tendereſt eſteem; in her he thought he diſcerned all the graces of his beloved wife, whom death had torn from his embraces; nay, ſo far did fancy lead him, that he believed he beheld, in the lovely maid, her perfect image and reſemblance. Conſtantia was not leſs captivated with her father's friend. Mordant had juſt entered into his thirty-fifth year; an age when the exuberant follies of youth are corrected by reaſon and experience. He was in his perſon rather above the middle ſtature, and elegantly proportioned. His complexion was of a lively brunette; and his dark and penetrating

eyes ſeemed the medium through which the numberleſs elegancies of his ſoul were conveyed. Wit and genius flowed ſpontaneous throughout his converſation, at once inſtructive and entertaining. He was not leſs converſant in ancient than in modern literature; and cultivated the ſciences with an enthuſiaſtic ardour. To refuſe eſteem and admiration to ſuperior virtues and talents, appeared to Conſtantia an inſult to juſtice and common ſenſe: we cannot therefore ſuppoſe that ſhe withheld this tribute from the prevailing, the irreſiſtable Mordant; nor can we be ſurprized that the god of love, who delights to approach us in the moſt pleaſing forms, and to allure us, as it were, into his bondage, ſhould enter the heart

heart of Conſtantia, under the banners of ſuch potent allies, *eſteem* and *admiration.*

Mordant did not ſuffer ſleep long to deprive him of the ſociety of Villers and his lovely daughter; for morn no ſooner appeared, than he returned to their hoſpitable reſidence.

At his arrival he found Conſtantia engaged in diſtributing to a number of poor villagers, whom ſickneſs or misfortune rendered incapable of purſuing their labours, a ſmall portion of bread and money, which by economy ſhe was enabled to allot daily to theſe little offices of humanity. He beheld her with ſilent rapture; the benevolence of her ſoul ſeemed to diffuſe a radiance round her, that not all her diffidence and modeſty could extinguiſh.

When ſhe had completed the pleaſing taſk, and by a tear ſupplied what niggard fortune forbade her to beſtow, ſhe flew once more to welcome the accompliſhed Mordant: nor did ſhe ſtrive to conceal thoſe agreeable ſenſations his preſence occaſioned; her tongue had ever been uſed to vibrate in ſtrict uniſon with her heart; and ſhe endeavoured not, by the falſe modulations of art, to jar the harmony of nature.

The day was ſpent again in thoſe gratifications which reſult only from intercourſes of mutual eſteem and love; and ſo much were they delighted with each other's ſociety, that Villers entreated his gueſt to make their abode his reſidence during his ſtay in the country.

Conſtantia each day, like a fair flower, unfolded new graces: her charms, unlike

thoſe

thoſe which captivate for a moment only, was rendered more ſecure by the rapid flight of time.

Mordant, who poſſeſſed a warmth of diſpoſition which could not long remain inſenſible to worth and beauty, felt the full force of her attractions: the melancholy which invaded his ſoul was in a ſhort time diſperſed; and in the ſociety of the beauteous maid he ſoon forgot thoſe tender ties of conjugal affection, which the invidious grave had rent aſunder.

Filial love had hitherto been the reigning paſſion of Conſtantia: but it now gave place to one more powerful, though, perhaps, leſs pure; ſhe ſtill loved her father with an enthuſiaſtic ardour; but ſhe no longer felt that unaffected pleaſure, that untainted delight, which ſhe had formerly experienced in his converſation;

converſation; the reſiſtleſs Mordant had ſubdued her heart.

——— "He alone,
"Heard, felt, and ſoon poſſeſſed every
"thought."

Till now ſhe had confined her wiſhes within the limits of her native village: but love unfettered them; ſhe no longer contemplated the ſweets of retirement, the beauties of nature, and the exalted pleaſures of virtue, but as the preſence and approbation of the beloved object rendered them valuable; and ſhe now ſaw, with regret, that too unlimited an eſteem is dangerous, and that by exceſs even our virtues may degenerate into vice or folly. The ſociety of Mordant was the ſole end of all her wiſhes; but the thought of being deprived of that was more bitter to her than death itſelf. Well might ſhe exclaim, with the poet,

"Alas!

" Alas! from the day that we met,
" What hope of an end of my woes;
" When I cannot endure to forget,
" The glance that undid my repoſe!"

While the tender boſom of Conſtantia was thus agitated, we cannot wonder if Mordant diſcovered the partiality with which the lovely girl viewed him. He was not unſkilled in the myſtic cabala of love: from his intercourſe with the female ſex, he had learned to trace to their ſource the ſtifled ſigh, the unguarded look, and the enticing ſmile. We muſt not therefore accuſe him of vanity, if he became ſo early acquainted with the ſtate of Conſtantia's heart, whoſe tongue and eyes were ever the genuine interpreters of it: but though he paſſionately loved her, and imagined himſelf not leſs the object of her affection, his heart was by no means tranquil;

tranquil; he was in continual dread, leſt hope, that pleaſing, tormenting paſſion, had only flattered him into the fond belief; and reſolved, therefore, to keep his love concealed till he diſcovered, to a certainty, whether it was mutual: but convinced at length that the partiality which Conſtantia entertained for him was more than an illuſion, he endeavoured to obtain the permiſſion of her father to lay his heart and fortune at the feet of his charming miſtreſs. Mordant poſſeſſed a large portion of wealth; and though we will not exalt Villers ſo far above the vanity of human nature, as to ſuppoſe it was viewed by him with indifference yet this we may ſafely affirm, that the generoſity and diſintereſted affection which his amiable gueſt diſcovered for his

his daughter was by far the greater inducement to his aſſent.

Every thing once more wore the aſpect of tranquillity; and a few weeks was to ſee the lovers united by the ſoft bands of hymen.

In this interval they were one day proceeding in a ſmall ferry-boat up the river, which ſo beautifully fertilizes the towns, plains, and villages of Oxfordſhire, Mordant, who was unacquainted with this part of England, was delighted with the charming variety which on every ſide diverſified the ſcene; and the day being perfectly ſerene and pleaſant, they inſenſibly purſued their voyage beyond the limits they at firſt intended; nor did they think of returning till they perceived ſome clouds, which obſcured the ſkies, threaten an approaching ſtorm.

The

The boat in which they ſailed being uncovered, they thought it expedient to go on ſhore, and procure a carriage to convey them home. Accordingly they landed, and walked forward through a thick grove of trees; till their curioſity was excited, by obſerving a ſmall urn, with the following inſcription on it: 'She who loved deſtroyed!' and on the bark of a yew which overſhadowed it, they read the following ſtanzas—

Far hence, O! Folly, lead thy laughing train,
To ſcenes where mirth the gladſome hours improve;
Nor here advance with noiſy clamours vain,
To break the ſilence of this ſacred grove.

No ſprightly notes reverb'rate thro' the air;
No jocund ſtep the echoing hills reſound;
No gaudy flowers the ſhepherd's hither bear,
But cypreſs wreaths to ſtrew the hallow'd ground.

Here

Here Melancholy heaves her lab'ring breaſt
In rayleſs ſtate, here, holds her ſable reign:
Lur'd by her penſive bird* ſhe joys to reſt,
And ſigh, beneath the ſhade, her ſecret pain.

Here, on Lorenza's tomb her head reclined,
To ſwell her ſorrows by the mournful view;
To weep the youth whom partial fate conſigned
To ſleep, ſo ſoon, beneath the mournful yew.

They had ſcarce read the lines before they perceived an elegant female figure approaching. She was arrayed in the ſable weeds of ſorrow, and "affliction ſeemed to have "touched her looks with ſomething "more than human." She advanced with a ſlow and ſtedfaſt pace; but when ſhe came up to them, and obſerved Mordant, ſhe flew into his

* Philomel.

embraces, exclaiming with extacy, 'My brother! my brother!' Their ſurprize and joy was mutual; but the violence of their tranſports, after ſome time ſubſiding, Narciſſa, which was the name of the fair ſtranger, conducted her brother and his amiable companions to her reſidence, a ſmall cottage not far from thence. Here, having refreſhed themſelves with a ſimple repaſt, Mordant expreſſed an ardent deſire of knowing the particulars of that myſterious circumſtance, which cauſed the clandeſtine departure of his ſiſter from the ſociety of her friends and tendereſt relatives. Narciſſa, then, with a ſigh that ſpoke the full meaſure of her grief, proceeded to ſatisfy her brother's inquiries.

You

YOU may remember, my dear brother, (ſaid ſhe) that at about the age of ſixteen I was ſent to one of the moſt capital convents at Paris, in order to perfect myſelf in the French tongue. Nature having endowed me with uncommon vivacity, my converſation was rendered ſo agreeable to the abbeſs, that in a ſhort time I became almoſt her inſeparable companion. She had a nephew, who was frequently admitted into our ſociety: he had lately entered into holy orders, and devoted himſelf to a cloiſter, although poſſeſſed of perſonal graces and accompliſhments to adorn a court. I became, alas! ſenſible too ſoon of his charms; nor was it long before I flattered myſelf that I was equally

the object of his attention; his dark expreſſive eyes ſpoke his paſſion more eloquently, I fancied, than the moſt elegant flow of words could have done. Young, however, as I was, I foreſaw the fatal effects which might ariſe from the indulgence of my love, and exerted every effort to extinguiſh a flame ſo hopeleſs and extravagant. But while I was ſummoning reaſon and pride to my aſſiſtance, I obſerved a viſible alteration in the conduct and manners of my beloved Lorenza. Wit and chearfulneſs no longer enlivened his converſation; he was ſilent, reſerved, and unattentive; his viſits to the abbeſs became leſs frequent, and by degrees totally ceaſed. I was at a loſs to account for this behaviour,

behaviour, and began really to believe that he beheld me with indifference. A month, however, having elapſed, he one day entered the apartment where I was; but, oh! how changed! the deepeſt gloom appeared on his countenance, his eyes no more ſhone with their uſual luſtre; his cheeks no more confeſſed the roſy glow of health. Being alone with him I could not forbear expreſſing my grief at the viſible decline I perceived in his health.

'Alas, Madam!' ſaid he, 'hopeleſs 'love has for ſome time rendered life a 'burden to me; but death, the harbinger 'of peace, is approaching! Why did 'heaven form my heart ſo ſuſceptible, 'ſo tremblingly alive, to ſoft ſympathy; 'or why, rather, did cruel deſtiny make 'it a crime for me to love! Gentle Nar-

'ciſſa,' ſaid he, for the firſt time taking my hand, 'it is your pity only that 'I aſk! Mine is a paſſion prohibited 'by all the laws of heaven and of 'earth: my vow is irrevocably paſt; 'angels and ſaints have regiſtered it!'

At this inſtant the abbeſs, entering the apartment, releaſed me from the embarraſſment into which this diſcourſe had thrown me. My thoughts were ſo immerſed in the paſt moments, that I was little diſpoſed to engage in the frivolous ſubjects of general converſations, from which I ſoon releaſed myſelf by feigning a ſlight indiſpoſition, and retiring to my chamber. When I was alone, I muſt own I felt a ſecret pleaſure in the reflection that I was the undoubted object of Lorenza's affection; although

I was

I was convinced that the rigid laws of a monaſtic life, to which he had from his infancy been devoted, muſt ever remain an invincible obſtacle to our union. Some days elapſed before I again ſaw him; and then I beheld him, alas! to increaſe only my ſorrows. His ſallow, dejected aſpect, and enervated frame, too plainly foretold that death was haſtening to conſign him to the gloomy vault.

I was ſo much ſhocked and affected with this interview, which my fears preſaged might probably be the laſt, that for once I forgot the dictates of female pride, and, covered with bluſhes, confeſſed my paſſion for him; conjuring him to endeavour, for my ſake, to live.

I will not attempt to deſcribe his tranſports

tranſports at this unexpected diſcovery: the agony of his mind began from that day to decreaſe, and to produce gradually the happieſt effect on his conſtitution. He now renewed his viſits to the abbeſs; and through the aſſiſtance of a faithful domeſtic, we frequently converſed together in ſecret. But, alas! to what purpoſe was this delightful intercourſe? The time fixed by my friends for me to leave the convent drew nigh. I was to be torn for ever from my beloved Lorenza; no more with rapture to behold him, nor "to gather honey falling from his tongue."

What ſighs, what tears, did not the cruel reflection coſt us? Abſence was inſupportable! We died a thouſand deaths in the thought; and at length, overcome

overcome by the violence of paſſion, we reſolved rather to hazard the diſpleaſure of heaven, than to endure the pangs of ſeparation. We eſcaped from the convent—arrived in England, and were privately married.

Our next care was to procure a retreat, which might effectually baffle thoſe efforts we were ſenſible would be employed to diſcover us; and, at length, in this cottage we bid adieu to the buſy world. In the ſociety of my Lorenza I found a charm, which made me look down with contempt on that gaiety and rank to which youth and family might perhaps have entitled me. Phyſic and natural philoſophy were his favourite purſuits, in which I was his conſtant aſſociate; and, in a ſhort period, made under my

my amiable inſtructor no inconſiderable proficiency in theſe uſeful and laudable ſtudies.

Six years ſerenely glided away; when my Lorenza, complaining one evening of a violent pain in his head, I immediately went into an adjacent room, and took from thence a bottle, which I imagined to contain the juices of certain herbs proper for the diſeaſe, and preſented him with a large portion of the mixture. Gracious God! what horror ſeized me, when I diſcovered that I had adminiſtered to him the moſt powerful extract of deadly hellebore, with which he had been making the day before, unknown to me, ſome curious experiments. The fatal poiſon ſoon diſperſed through every vein, and rent his frame with the

the moſt excruciating tortures. His eyes rolled; the agonies of death were on him: but, oh! what were theſe corporal pangs compared to thoſe which tore my diſtracted ſoul? I gave myſelf up to all the horrors of deſpair, while he fixed his expiring eyes on me; and, forgetful of his own, ſeemed but to feel for my miſery.

A few hours completed my woes; I beheld him ſtretched a gloomy corpſe before me. My griefs were too accumulated to find relief from tears; thoſe kind alleviating drops were denied me; and I had put an end to an exiſtence, which I execrated, had not heaven arreſted this impious hand: I trembled, and fell proſtrate before that Being, whoſe divine laws I was on the point of violating.

From

From this moment my ſoul became more calm: I reſolved no more to enter the world, but to wear out the remainder of my days in ſolitude. I daily viſit the tomb of my dear Lorenza; and while, with ſtreaming eyes, I hang over it, my ſoul, borne on the wings of pious hope, aſcends to thoſe bleſſed manſions, where we ſhall be reunited, and reſide together to all eternity.

Narciſſa's narrative drew tears from the eyes of her amiable auditors: when ſhe had concluded, ſhe entreated her brother to recite the events which had befallen him during her abſence.

YOUR flight from the convent (replied Mordant) was no ſooner diſcovered than, you will naturally conclude, we ſent meſſengers to all thoſe parts of

of France and England, which appeared moſt likely to conceal you. Theſe, however, proving unſucceſsful, I embarked myſelf at France, where I then was on my travels for England; and, having arrived here, purſued you with equal avidity and ill ſucceſs; till one day, as I was by chance paſſing a jeweller's ſhop in London, my eye was attracted by a miniature picture, which on examination I found to be the ſame I had given you a few months before to be copied. I inſtantly went into the ſhop; and, having paid the price of it, enquired how it came into the tradeſman's hands; hoping that this trifling incident might poſſibly enable me to trace you out.

The jeweller informed me that he

had purchaſed it of a young woman, whoſe appearance, he ſaid, by no means agreeing with the value of the jewels which ſurrounded the picture, had induced him to ſuſpect her honeſty, and compel her to ſubmit to an examination before a magiſtrate: but no proofs of her guilt appearing, ſhe was diſcharged. I then aſked him if he could direct me to her: he told me he could; and that, if I pleaſed, he would ſend a lad to conduct me to her lodgings. I eagerly embraced his offer, and followed my guide till we came to an obſcure houſe remote from the metropolis, where he informed me ſhe reſided. Having inquired, as the jeweller had directed me, for a young woman named Milford, I was conducted up two pair of ſtairs into a ſmall apartment, where ſhe was.

She

She appeared to be about twenty-five years of age; her aſpect was both beautiful and intelligent, and her mien full of dignity and grace. She received me with an eaſy, though dejected air; and inquired politely into the cauſe of my viſit. You will conclude I was ſurprized to find a perſon ſo foreign in every reſpect to what my imagination had been taught to expect, from the meanneſs and obſcurity of her reſidence. I overcame my embarraſſment, however, ſufficiently to apologize for my abrupt intruſion; and, having produced your picture, was proceeding to relate the occaſion of my viſit, had ſhe not interrupted me, by demanding earneſtly, If calumny was not yet weary of perſecuting her? I intreated her to put a more favourable

conſtruction on my viſit, than to imagine I came to offend, intentionally, one whoſe ſex and appearance demanded protection and reſpect, rather than inſult: after this explanation ſhe became more calm, and ſuffered me to proceed in my inquiries concerning the picture; but when I had ended, ſhe told me ſhe feared it was out of her power to give me any ſatisfactory intelligence of the perſon to whom it belonged. She continued, with a ſigh, which gave new grace to her accents, that ſhe was a widowed orphan, from her infancy familiar with ſorrow; that, being on her road from the weſt of England, ſhe was driven, by extreme poverty, and a violent ſtorm, to take refuge in a ſhed belonging to a large inn. There, ſhe ſaid, ſhe was diſcovered by a young lady,

who,

who, touched with her ſituation, invited her into an apartment at the inn, where ſhe gave a ſhort detail of her misfortunes; at the concluſion of which, the ſtranger, after lamenting, almoſt with tears, that her preſent circumſtances rendered her incapable of relieving her more eſſentially, put three guineas and the picture into her hand, and departed from the inn without giving her time to pour forth her acknowledgments. 'Unhappy ſufferer!' exclaimed Narciſſa, interrupting her brother, 'I remember 'the circumſtance well: I was then with 'my dear Lorenza, on our way to this 'retirement; where her unfortunate 'ſtory has frequently been the ſubject 'of our converſation.'

The fair widow, (ſaid Mordant, reſuming his narrative) told me that ſhe

was ignorant of the name or condition of her benefactreſs; but at my requeſt ſhe gave ſo lively a deſcription of her perſon and manners, as left no doubt indeed remaining of her being my amiable ſiſter. At my departure I pulled out my purſe, which I entreated her to accept as a ſmall tribute of gratitude for the trouble I had given her; but ſhe refuſed it with evident marks of diſpleaſure. I inſtantly ſet out for that part of England where I believed almoſt to a certainty you had been, and in vain ſought you for ſome weeks. But forgive me, my dear Narciſſa, when I confeſs that I no longer purſued you with that unwearied aſſiduity I had hitherto; my thoughts were now engaged by an object in which my paſſions were more intereſted; and, as

we

we are too apt to make theſe the firſt principles of action, you will pardon me, when you are acquainted that the beautiful widow thus diminiſhed my fraternal ſolicitude: I had ſeen, it is true, women equally lovely, equally graceful, and perhaps more accompliſhed; but I was never ſo powerfully impreſſed by their charms. I gazed on them as on beauteous paintings, which captivates the ſenſes, but leaves the heart in poſſeſſion of itſelf. I now experienced different ſenſations; my whole ſoul was engroſſed by the charming ſtranger, who had thus involuntarily poſſeſſed herſelf of my affections.

On my arrival in town I went immediately to her abode: my entrance viſibly diſcompoſed her; "her riſing "beauties flu'hed a higher bloom;" and the

the charming diſorder which agitated her whole frame rendered her irreſiſtably lovely. I made an aukward apology for my viſit, alleging that I could not remain unintereſted in the fortunes of one who undoubtedly poſſeſſed, in the higheſt degree, my ſiſter's eſteem. I did not fail to turn this interview to my advantage, by letting her evidently ſee, though ſhe affected to be ignorant of it, the impreſſion ſhe had made on me; and, after having enjoyed her preſence and converſation ſome hours, reluctantly took my leave.

At my departure I intreated permiſſion to renew my viſit; but this ſhe abſolutely, though politely, refuſed; obſerving, that the moſt circumſpect could not eſcape the envenomed ſhaft of calumny. My paſſion was, however,

too

too violent to be eaſily repulſed; I reſolved to purſue and to poſſeſs her: to this end I made frequently attempts in vain to gain admittance to her; till time and opportunity at length prevailing, with joy I diſcovered that I was not indifferent to her. I will not intrude further upon you by entering into a detail of the various circumſtances attendant on my conqueſt; I will only add, that poverty, and the more powerful influence of love, ſubdued, in an unguarded moment, a heart rendered almoſt invulnerable by the ſhield of virtue. She fell — I triumphed — and was happy.

We retired to a beautiful villa in the ſouth of France, where we ſacrificed to love alone; and ſo undiminiſhed was my paſſion

paſſion for her, that time ſeemed only to endear her to me: but notwithſtanding that joy and affluence awakened her hours,

" Amid the roſes fierce repentance rear'd
" Her ſmoaky creſt."

The recollection of violated honour planted the moſt agonizing pangs in her conſcious boſom: ſhe would frequently exclaim,

" O heavenly virtue, thine's a ſacred flame;
" And ſtill my ſoul pays homage to thy name!"

As I loved her with unremitted ardour, I endeavoured to diſſipate the melancholy into which ſhe had fallen, by the moſt powerful ſophiſtry: but ſhe confuted my florid arguments by the plain unadorned accents of truth and virtue. I became at length ſo touched with her ſorrows, that I reſolved to make her the lawful

lawful partner of my life and fortunes. How great was my ſurprize when ſhe declined the offer! 'I will 'never,' ſhe replied, 'pollute the ſacred 'vows of hymen, by rendering them ſub-'ſervient to the purpoſes of vice; I will 'not, by the ſpecious guile of marriage, 'gloſs over my iniquity, and endeavour 'to ſhield myſelf from that cenſure 'I have ſo juſtly incurred.' Five years after ſhe was ſeized with a diſorder, which put an end to her exiſtence. She was ſenſible of her approaching diſſolution; and the day before ſhe expired, having taken leave of me in the moſt affectionate manner, ſhe put into my hands a ſmall packet, which ſhe made me promiſe to deliver to my ſiſter; conjuring me, with her laſt breath,

to

to renew my inquiries in order to diſcover you.

Here Mordant cloſed his narrative; and Conſtantia felt no diſpleaſure in obſerving ſome tributary tears diſtil from his eyes at the melancholy recital. Narciſſa expreſſed an earneſt deſire to ſee the paper before mentioned: Mordant and Conſtantia therefore availed themſelves of her curioſity, to prevail with her to return with them, and ſtay at leaſt till their nuptials were performed.

Narciſſa could not withſtand this invitation; ſhe was delighted with Conſtantia; and, for the firſt time ſince the death of her Lorenza, felt a gleam of joy ſteal upon her. A poſt-chaiſe was preſently procured; and in a few hours they arrived at the habitation of Villers. In the morning, Narciſſa ſolicited her brother

ther to ſuffer her to peruſe the paper; which Mordant immediately complying with, ſhe broke the ſeal, and read as follows.

TO NARCISSA.

FORGIVE me, Madam, if I recal to your remembrance an unfortunate woman, whoſe ſorrows, when travelling in the weſt of England, ſo forcibly touched you.

Unſtained alike in thought and deed, I was not then perhaps totally unworthy your ſympathy or benevolence: how, alas! am I now fallen!

You will probably receive this from the author of my guilt, your too charming brother; he will diſcloſe to you the fatal chance which ſo cloſely united our deſtiny: You ſtart! Yes, Madam, I have violated the ſacred ties of mother and of

wife. I have injured the moſt generous and worthy of men; a huſband who reſcued me, overwhelmed with grief and poverty, from the paths of ſeduction; and, forgetful of his birth and expectations, made me the partner of his heart and fortunes. But you, Madam, are no ſtranger to my ſtory. Unconſtrained by a parent's harſh command, my choice was free and voluntary. I knew not love, it is true; but gratitude and eſteem reigned ſo powerfully in my breaſt, that I miſtook them for a ſofter paſſion: a paſſion which, would to heaven, I had never ſince known! Forgive me, Madam, if, after this confeſſion, I take the liberty of addreſſing you, nay more, of ſoliciting you to ſtand forth a mediator for me to my moſt injured huſband. I conjure you,

Madam,

Madam, by your ſympathy of ſoul, to bear to him the tidings of my fall: let not the tongue of calumny be its meſſenger, and reflect a double ſhade on the enormity of my guilt. The generous heart of my Villers, thus wounded, would, I am ſure, break with my ingratitude.

Relate it in the gentleſt accents your own humanity can dictate; aſſure him that, amidſt affluence and gaiety, my heart was torn with the keeneſt remorſe; and conjure him to blot the hated remembrance of me from his boſom.

The abode of my injured Villers will be eaſily found; ſtill, under the weight of paternal diſpleaſure, occaſioned by his diſintereſted attachment to me: he poſſeſſes a ſmall curacy at the village of ———, in

Oxfordſhire. To this place I have at different times privately conveyed to him ſums which have, I hope, ſomewhat leſſened thoſe inconveniences ariſing from the narrowneſs of his fortune.

Adieu, deareſt Madam! Pardon the trouble I have given you: you were the only friend intruſted with my ſtory; the only friend in whom I could confide. Diſturb not, then, my departed ſpirit, by rejecting my requeſt: and may that peace which ever reſides with virtue, that peace which has long deſerted me, be for ever your attendant!

ELMA.

When Narciſſa had read this letter, and perceived the name of Villers, her countenance was viſibly agitated; ſhe

ſhe put the fatal epiſtle into her brother's hand, and fell back motionleſs in her chair.

What muſt we imagine the ſenſations of Mordant to be on diſcovering that his deceaſed miſtreſs was the unfortunate wife of Villers, and the mother to his beloved Conſtantia! with whom his union was now prohibited by all laws, human and divine. He beheld himſelf in one moment caſt, from the ſummit of hope, into the deepeſt gulph of deſpair. Cautious, however, of communicating the dreadful contents to the tender Conſtantia, he endeavoured to aſſume an aſpect of compoſure, in order for the preſent to conceal them: but Villers, by chance, caſting his eye on the fatal ſcroll, was too well acquainted with

the hand-writing to miſtake it. Forgetful therefore of ceremony, he impatiently ſeized it; and, alas! too ſoon became ſenſible of the dire ſecret it contained.

Grief and indignation alternately divided his ſoul: but the latter ſoon ſubſided; love formed ten thouſand excuſes for his inconſtant Elma. Her poverty, her youth, her inexperience, powerfully pleaded in her behalf: he ſeemed to accuſe fate, rather than inclination, as acceſſary to her fall. Conſtantia, ſurprized and alarmed at the ſudden alteration in the countenance of her father and her friends, could now no longer be kept ignorant of the cauſe; ſhe heard it, and in the inſtant,

——" The

——" The diſenchanted earth loſt all its
" luſtre."

The bud of love, which promiſed ſo fair a flower, was blaſted in the moment of its unfolding; and that paſſion which till now had been her pride, ſhe muſt for ever ſhrink from with horror. The taſk, ſevere as it was, ſhe attempted; and endeavoured to find relief from philoſophy, the theory of which ſhe had ſtudied with ſo much pleaſure: but, alas! how different is the practice!

All engagements now ceaſing betwixt Conſtantia and Mordant, he was prevailed upon, by the importunity of Villers, to take his laſt look and laſt farewel of her. He accordingly departed in a few days with his ſiſter, with whom he reſolved for ſome time to reſide.

Conſtantia

Conſtantia endeavoured to aſſume fortitude to ſupport the cruel ſeparation. The unpleaſing moment drew nigh; the carriage was already at the door; and tears only ſupplied the place of ſpeech. They ſnatched a laſt embrace; and, having ſighed an eternal adieu, Mordant, accompanied by Narciſſa, threw himſelf, overwhelmed with grief, into the chaiſe, which ſoon conveyed him from the once tranquil abode of Villers. Conſtantia had called forth all her fortitude to enable her to ſupport this trying ſcene. Nature could now no longer endure the conflict; her ſpirits ſunk under the weight of grief, and ſhe fainted in the arms of her father. When ſhe had recovered, he endeavoured, with paternal tenderneſs, to ſoothe her ſorrows. 'My

'child,

'child, it is your duty,' he ſaid, 'to 'ſubmit patiently to the will of hea-'ven: look up with gratitude and 'adoration to the ſupreme Author of 'all events, who has ſnatched you 'from the guilt into which you were 'innocently plunging yourſelf.

'Had not the unſeen hand of Pro-'vidence preſerved you, you would 'before this have been polluted by an 'union at which nature herſelf recoils. 'Strive then, my Conſtantia, to calm 'your preſent grief by the contem-'plation of one more inſupportable.' Conſtantia attended with meekneſs to her father's counſel, by which ſhe ardently wiſhed to profit; but, alas! her love for Mordant was too firmly rooted in her ſoul for reaſon to extirpate: without him the whole appeared

a joyleſs

a joyleſs deſert; thoſe rural views which his preſence had rendered all enchantment, remained but ſo many ſad mementos of her departed joys.

Her wretchedneſs, however, ſhe ſtudiouſly concealed from her father, and in his preſence endeavoured to aſſume an air of ſerenity. She repreſſed the heart-rending ſigh, and in ſilence drank her tears.

Grief preyed inwardly on her tender frame, and ſoon produced the moſt alarming conſequences; for Villers in a ſhort time beheld his daughter in a deep decline, which ſoon cloſed the period of her exiſtence. Before ſhe expired, ſhe expreſſed an earneſt deſire of ſeeing Mordant and Narciſſa, who arrived a few minutes before ſhe breathed her laſt.

At

At their entrance a ſmile of joy beamed on her countenance; ſtill beautiful even in the agonies of death. She endeavoured to ſpeak, but her ſtrength was quite exhauſted: ſhe remained ſpeechleſs for a few moments, and then expired in the arms of Narciſſa and her diſtracted father.

Her remains were depoſited in the village church-yard, with no other inſcription over them than the following, on a ſmall tablet, which Mordant cauſed to be erected:

'SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
'CONSTANTIA VILLERS.

"Early, bright, tranſient, chaſte, as morning
"dew,
"She ſparkled, was exhal'd, and went to heaven."

Villers,

Villers, unable to endure a place where every object ſerved only to remind him of his wretchedneſs, reſigned his curacy, and reſided with Mordant till his death, which happened about three years after that of his daughter.

Mordant, who could not prevail upon Narciſſa to abandon her retirement, at the death of Villers bought a ſeat, adjacent to it; where he ſpent a conſiderable part of the year. His diſpoſition, however, being naturally gay and volatile, permitted him not wholly to ſeclude himſelf from the gaieties of life: theſe, with the aſſiſtance of time, ſoon diſſipated that dejection which aroſe from diſappointed love; but although he reſumed his wonted ſerenity, and changed the melancholy cypreſs to the ſweet myrtle, the image of

of Conſtantia was never totally effaced: he frequently viſited her tomb with Narciſſa; nor could he ever aſſume fortitude to behold it without the tendereſt emotion.

THE CREOLE.

A Series of years had propitiouſly revolved, ſince the bands of hymen united George Sedley to th moſt amiable and beauteous of women: the web of their deſtiny ſeemed formed of the faireſt and moſt delicate texture, and fortune had ſcattered their path with her richeſt treaſures.

Their reſidence was at a beautiful villa, detached from the tumult of cities, where they enjoyed the pleaſures of rational ſociety and rural retirement.

At the cloſe of a delightful ſummer, as Mrs. Sedley was one day ſitting at a window which commanded an extenſive view of the adjacent meadows, her feelings were ſenſibly affected

affected by beholding a woman extended on the ground, apparently in the agonies of death. Her head was ſupported by a youth about eighteen years of age, whoſe countenance expreſſed the moſt poignant grief. The compaſſionate Harriot Sedley immediately ordered the unfortunate woman to be conveyed into the houſe, and a phyſician to be ſent for; though ſhe appeared to be reduced more through want and ſorrow than by pain or diſeaſe. By the timely care and attention of her benefactreſs, her health in a few days became perfectly re-eſtabliſhed; and the youth, who was her ſon, endeavoured to aſſume an aſpect of more compoſure; for, till now, he had remained at her bed-ſide, a prey to all the horrors of deſpair.

Mrs. Sedley found the unfortunate ſtranger to be a woman of talents and high accompliſhments. She was about the age of forty; tall and elegant in her perſon; her complexion was dark; and her face, though it could not be called handſome, poſſeſſed ſuch ſweetneſs and ſenſibility, that rendered it more captivating than beauty itſelf.

Mrs. Sedley felt an earneſt deſire to know what ſingular calamity had thus reduced one whom addreſs and education ſeemed to have deſigned for the moſt elevated ſphere of life: ſhe was cautious, however, of expreſſing her curioſity, fearing ſhe might heighten the wretchedneſs of her friend, by any apparent diſtruſt of her character or conduct.

At

At length the ſtranger, as they were ſitting one day together, thus addreſſed her.

AFTER the unſpeakable obligations, Madam, I have received, it is a juſtice I owe to your kindneſs, and my own character, to convince you, by relating my wretched ſtory, that my misfortunes have not originated from vice or miſconduct: the world may, indeed, accuſe me of the latter; but it is an ill-judging one, which cenſures alike the innocent and the guilty.

I was born (ſaid ſhe) in one of the Weſt India iſlands: my father was an Engliſh merchant, who having married the daughter of an opulent planter there, ſettled in the iſland. I was an infant when my mother died; and,

being the only child my father had, enjoyed his affection undiminiſhed; but, though his fondneſs was to ſuch exceſs that he could not endure the thought of parting with me, this extravagant partiality was by no means injurious to my education, as the liberality of his fortune enabled him to invite over men of eminent abilities, to cultivate and improve my talents.

I acquired a perfect knowledge, not only of the French and Italian, but alſo of the Latin language, beſides making ſome progreſs in moral and natural philoſophy.

Being ſole heir to my father's wealth, which, I before ſaid, was conſiderable, I was not deſtitute of admirers: but I beheld all mankind with equality; nor had yet ſeen the man with whom I thought

I thought I could be content to unite my fate, for my diſpoſition being naturally contemplative, and having dedicated a large portion of my time to the Muſes, my mind became inſenſibly tinctured with that generous enthuſiaſm they ever inſpire. To render marriage that permanent ſtate of bliſs, which my fond imagination had pictured it, I believed more was requiſite than wealth, titles, or external accompliſhments. I looked for ſympathy of ſoul, and perfect union of ideas. Like Clariſſa, I wiſhed, 'to paſs my 'life in rational tranquillity, with a 'friend whoſe virtues I could reſpect, 'whoſe talents I could admire, and 'who would make my eſteem the 'baſis of my affection.'

I had juſt entered into my twentieth year,

year, when it pleaſed heaven to deprive me of the beſt of parents. By his death I became poſſeſſed of a fortune ſurpaſſing my moſt ambitious deſires: but this acquiſition, I can with ſincerity affirm, was far, very far from compenſating the loſs I ſuſtained in him. I performed the laſt ſad melancholy office to his ever-honoured remains, and ſhed over him the unfeigned tear of filial ſorrow.

As my father, during his life, was naturally fond of thoſe amuſements which enliven the faſhionable circle, I had mingled much more in it than was agreeable to my tranquil turn of mind. Now, being entire miſtreſs of my actions, I reſolved to indulge myſelf in a manner of living more ſuited to my diſpoſition. Having, therefore, retired

retired to an elegant villa, which my father had fitted up in a remote part of the iſland, I reduced my numerous acquaintance to a few ſelect friends; and there found myſelf in poſſeſſion of the greateſt ſweeteners of human life;

——"Friendſhip, retirement, rural quiet,
"books,
"An elegant ſufficiency, content."

A ſtranger to love, envy, or ambition, my days were crowned with joy, and my nights with undiſturbed repoſe.—Delightful hours! why ſo ſoon did you ſpread your airy pinions, and leave me to weep for that peace which can return no more.

I had been but a few months ſettled in my tranquil abode, when a young man arrived in the iſland with letters of recommendation to my father,

ther, from a friend of his in America. I acquainted the ſtranger with the loſs I had experienced in the beſt of parents; at the ſame time aſſuring him, that any ſervices it was in my power to render him he might command.

From that hour he had free acceſs to me. His ſtature was of the middle height, graceful and well proportioned; his education was liberal, his judgment correct, and his manners gentle and engaging: but his countenance! Oh, why did nature form it ſo ingenuous? why was not perfidity and ingratitude ſtamped on every feature? Theſe attractions too eaſily ſubdued my unguarded heart; my joys became all centered in the agreeable ſtranger.

In a few weeks after his arrival, he took advantage of that partiality which,

I am

I am fearful, he was too ſenſible I entertained for him, and profeſſed a paſſion for me, ſo ſincere and diſintereſted, that I eaſily gave credit to that which I ſo ardently wiſhed. Wealth is ſurely not enviable! happy is the village maid whoſe innocence and beauty are her only dower: no riches, no titles, to allure, ſhe enjoys the affections of her faithful ſhepherd, unbiaſſed by ſordid intereſt or ambition.

But to reſume a ſtory which, would to Heaven, I could for ever blot from my remembrance! I did not long endeavour to conceal that paſſion which was my greateſt pride. It is true, the object of it was undiſtinguiſhed by wealth or ſtation; but theſe I viewed with contempt, when ſet in competition with thoſe virtues and accompliſhments my fond

imagination

imagination aſcribed to my beloved Groveby. He continued to urge his love; and with ſuch ſucceſs, that in ſix months after we were married.

This ſtep drew on me the cenſure of all my acquaintance, who thought it madneſs in me to laviſh ſo large a fortune on a young man poſſeſſed of no other recommendation than that of a good perſon and education.

Their reflections, however, gave me little concern: I had found a man who ſeemed formed to render my life permanently happy; and rejoiced that heaven had enabled me to exalt him to that ſphere to which, I flattered myſelf, his worth and talents would become an ornament.

Perfect harmony ſubſiſted betwixt us two years; but, alas! at the end of that period

period I perceived with grief, that indifference gradually ſucceeded the ardour of affection which had till then influenced the conduct of my huſband. To a heart leſs tender, perhaps leſs fond, than mine, this change might have been imperceptible; but my love was of that delicate nature, as to ſtartle even at the ſhadow of unkindneſs. Oh, that it had been but a ſhadow! He ſpent whole days from me; my endearments were irkſome to him; and if I inquired into the cauſe of his dejection or diſpleaſure, he anſwered me with ſuch coolneſs and reſerve, as cut me to the ſoul.

Oh, Madam, may you never experience the pangs of unreturned affection; may you never feel the tortures I then endured! for I ſtill loved the dear, ungrateful youth, with undiminiſhed ardour; and I

time, which had weakened and deſtroyed his paſſion, ſeemed only to have added ſtrength to mine.

At length, one day, he told me that, being weary of a climate which he found by no means agreed with his conſtitution, he was reſolved to return to America; and ordered me to prepare immediately for our departure, as he had ſettled for our paſſage in a veſſel which ſailed in a few weeks.

I was rather ſurprized at this information, as he had never before intimated his intention: I did not, however, oppoſe his deſign; but inſtantly made preparations for our voyage. Moſt of our effects being conveyed on board, and the time having arrived, within a few days, for our departure, my huſband went one day to dine on board with

with the captain of the veſſel. I awaited his return till late in the evening, when I began to grow alarmed at his delay, fearing that ſome accident might have befallen him: but oh, Madam! how ſhall I deſcribe my agony, when, on ſending a meſſenger to enquire for him, I diſcovered that the veſſel had been under ſail ſome hours, and that my perfidious huſband had embarked in it.

A cold ſweat bedewed my limbs, a miſt of darkneſs ſeemed to gather round me, and I ſunk motionleſs to the ground: oh! that I had remained for ever inſenſible, that death had for ever freed my wearied ſpirit from this ſcene of wretchedneſs!

I remained almoſt in a ſtate of inſanity ſeveral days, when a nervous fever enſuing, reduced me ſo low, that my life

was deſpaired of: youth, however, and the natural ſtrength of my conſtitution, baffled the diſeaſe; and health returned, though my peace of mind was for ever fled.

I now ſaw myſelf deprived of that affluence to which, from my infancy, I had been accuſtomed; for my unkind Groveby had, ſome months before, unknown to me, converted our eſtates into caſh; all which he had taken with him, leaving me only one ſmall plantation, which I was likewiſe under a neceſſity of diſpoſing of, to ſupply my immediate exigencies.

This ſudden reverſe of fortune gave me an opportunity of diſcovering a ſimilar alteration in the conduct of my acquaintance: the warmth of friendſhip was now changed into cool indifference;

and

and thoſe few who ſtill continued to wear the appearance of cordiality, rendered my viſits irkſome, by ſatirical remarks, or mortifying reflections.

From my honeſt negroes alone I received conſolation; their affection remained unſhaken, and glowed with more fervour amidſt the clouds of ſorrow and misfortune that ſurrounded me. I could, indeed, have raiſed a conſiderable ſum by diſpoſing of them; but, though born in a clime which authorizes the inhuman cuſtom of bartering our fellow-creatures for gold, I ever loathed and deteſted the horrid practice.

Surely, my dear Madam, we have no right to tyrannize over, and treat as brutes, thoſe who will doubtleſs one day be made partakers with us

of an immortality. Have they not the ſame faculties, the ſame paſſions, and the ſame innate ſenſe of good and evil? Should we, then, who are enlightened by the holy precepts of Chriſtianity, refuſe to ſtretch forth the friendly hand, to point theſe human affections to the moſt laudable purpoſes, the glory of God, and the real advantage of ſociety.

" Let us not miſlike them for their com-
" plexion,
" The ſhadow'd livery of the burniſh'd ſun."

It is the charming variety with which nature has adorned her works, that ſo much raiſes our admiration and delight. The lily would bloom leſs fair, uncontraſted by the roſe; and the ſplendor of day become leſs welcome, was it not for the pleaſing

viciſſitude

viciſſitude of night. Is it then reaſonable to deſpiſe a part of the creation, for contributing towards the beauty of the whole?

You will, I hope, Madam, excuſe this unneceſſary digreſſion; but I have experienced ſuch unſhaken affection from theſe poor creatures, and have at the ſame time been ſo frequently witneſs to the cruelty and oppreſſion which are daily exerciſed on them, that I could not refrain from entering with warmth on a ſubject in which my feelings have been ſo often wounded.

Many of the negroes had grown old in my father's ſervice; and though their lives had paſſed with labour, gentleneſs and kind treatment had rendered the toil light. I could not endure

endure the thought, therefore, of dooming their age to the iron hand of tyranny, to whatſoever poverty I might myſelf be reduced.

Thus reſolved, I aſſembled them together; and, to the beſt of my remembrance, ſpoke to them in the following manner.

'MY HONEST FRIENDS,

'You ſee it has pleaſed heaven 'to deprive me of that affluence of 'which I was formerly poſſeſſed: you 'have all been faithful and affectionate; 'and many of you have ſpent your 'youth up in my own or my fa-'ther's ſervice. Aſſure yourſelves, then, 'that I do not conſider it the leaſt 'of my ſorrows, that fortune has not 'left it in my power to render your

'age

'age peaceful and independant, as 'your youth has been faithful and 'induſtrious. But that God, whom 'you have been taught to adore, 'will befriend you, if you continue 'to ſerve him with humility, with 'patience, and with reſignation. Do 'not however imagine, I conjure you, 'that I mean to doom you to foreign 'ſlavery; no, my friends, you are 'from this moment free.

'Liberty is all your poor miſtreſs has 'to beſtow on you; all ſhe has now left to 'recompenſe you for your faithful ſer-'vices.'

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the effect this addreſs produced on the negroes; not a dry eye was ſeen among them: ſo far from being elated with the freedom offered them, they ſeemed

deſirous

deſirous of ruſhing again into ſlavery, that I might reap the benefit ariſing from the ſale of them.

This ſtriking inſtance of their gratitude ſerved only to confirm me in my reſolution; ſo that, after bedewing my hand with their tears, they all departed, except one negro girl, who threw herſelf at my feet, with the moſt lively expreſſion of grief, entreating me to kill her rather than diſcard her; declaring, that ſhe preferred death to that of being ſeparated from me. I could not withſtand this mark of her affection, more particularly as my Theodore, whom you now ſee the companion of my misfortunes, was then an infant, and my weak ſtate of health rendered me incapable of paying him that unremitted attention his tender

tender years required. With this girl I retired to a ſmall abode, in a diſtant part of the iſland, and reſigned myſelf wholly to the care of Providence; the money I had raiſed on the plantation before-mentioned, being now very nigh exhauſted.

On the evening of the ſecond day after my arrival, I perceived the negroes I had diſcharged advancing towards my new habitation. They had been at work on ſome plantations; and were approaching, to ſhare with me the fruits of their honeſt induſtry. At firſt I abſolutely rejected their generous offer; but, finding that my refuſal ſenſibly afflicted them, I conſented to accept a third part of the money they offered.

From this day they conſtantly perſiſted

ſiſted in devoting to me the above portion of their wages, accompanied with ſuch evident marks of ſatisfaction, that my acceptance of their ſervices ſeemed to afford them the higheſt pleaſure they were capable of enjoying.

In this ſolitude I remained twelve years; during which time I made frequent inquiries after my huſband, writing repeatedly to ſeveral of my father's correſpondents in America; but could not gain the leaſt intelligence concerning him. I continued, therefore, entirely ſupported by the affectionate negroes, by whoſe aſſiſtance I was ſupplied, not only with the neceſſaries, but, I may add, even with the comforts of life. This ſtate of dependance was, however, to an ingenuous mind, painful and humiliating;

miliating: but I had, alas! no other reſource!

My chief employment and delight was that of cultivating and improving thoſe talents and virtues with which heaven had endued my beloved ſon: for his ſake, I once more courted the ſciences and the Muſes, from whom ſorrow had long eſtranged me.

My days were thus gliding on, when I became acquainted with a gentleman, named Seamore: he had formerly been a captain in the navy, and had ſpent his youth in the ſervice of his country; but finding that the upſtarts of an hour too frequently bore off the well-earned prize from the hardy veteran, he reſolved no more to hazard the dangers of the deep, but to forget the toils of war in the

ſerene joys of domeſtic life. With this intention, and the hopes of improving a moderate fortune, he purchaſed a large plantation in the iſland; to which he retired with his daughter, the fair Juliana. This gentleman was acquainted with my unhappy ſtory by one of my negroes, employed on his plantation: he expreſſed an earneſt deſire to ſee me; which being related to me, the negro with my permiſſion conducted him one evening, accompanied with his daughter, to our obſcure retreat.

Juliana appeared to be about ſixteen years of age. Her ſtature was below the middle height, but finely proportioned; her features were delicate; and, as the poet beautifully ſays of Lavinia,

"The modeſt virtues mingled in her eyes."

On

On their entrance ſhe entreated me, with an air of peculiar ſweetneſs, to pardon that curioſity, excited by my ſuperior virtues and unmerited misfortunes.

I found little difficulty in returning this compliment; for there was ſomething ſo engaging in her aſpect, that I uttered only the ſentiments of my heart, when I aſſured her that, to whatever cauſe I was indebted for this viſit, I ſhould conſider it with pleaſure, ſince it introduced me to one ſo truly amiable.

From that time ſcarce a day paſſed in which we did not ſee each other. The captain diſcovered a ſtriking partiality for my dear boy, and generouſly offered to be the patron of his future fortunes.

Not long after this, I perceived an alarming change in my Theodore; his vivacity forſook him, he grew thoughtful and melancholy, and a total decline of health ſeemed gradually to have taken place.

One day, when I had been for ſome time endeavouring to diſcover if any ſecret grief was the occaſion of this unhappy alteration in him, he ſaid, 'Alas! my mother, it is an hopeleſs, 'guilty paſſion, that is thus conſuming my youth. It is love, to which 'honour, gratitude, and every tie of 'friendſhip, forbids me to aſpire.—And 'yet who could behold thee, Juliana, 'and reſiſt thy ſoft attractions? Thy 'innocence, thy beauty, and thy hea'venly goodneſs!—Oh, fortune! till 'now, I was inſenſible of thy un-

'kindneſs!

'kindneſs! Poſſeſſed of health and 'content, I ſighed not for affluence I 'never knew. But love has taught 'me to be ambitious! Why was the 'curſe of poverty entailed on me? 'Why am I doomed to languiſh in 'ſight of that bliſs I muſt never enjoy?'

He then told me, that chance had diſcovered the ſituation of his heart to Juliana, and that they had exchanged vows of eternal truth. 'But, alas!' continued he, 'can I, to gratify my own 'paſſion, thus impoſe on the unſuſpect-'ing openneſs of my generous patron? 'Can I return his friendſhip by ſe-'ducing his lovely daughter from the 'path of duty; by ſeducing her into 'the arms of one who, by that action, 'will diſpoſſeſs himſelf of his only in-'heritance, his honour and integrity?

'No, my mother, rather let me loſe 'her for ever, than, by baſeneſs and 'ingratitude, ceaſe to deſerve her!' I embraced him with tranſport, and looked up with gratitude to heaven for bleſſing me with a ſon whoſe virtues ſo highly adorned human nature. Yet this exceſs of joy was damped by the miſerable reflection, that I might perhaps in a ſhort time loſe him for ever. I tried every effort to divert the deep melancholy to which, with ſorrow, I beheld him daily made the prey; but finding all my attempts ineffectual, I reſolved to remove to a more diſtant part of the iſland, hoping that abſence and change of objects might reſtore to my beloved ſon his wonted ſerenity.

With this reſolution, I went one morning

morning to our friend, and diſcloſed to him the means I propoſed taking, to extinguiſh a paſſion, which promiſed to be fatal, not only to my Theodore, but, if ſuffered to take too deep root, highly injurious to the peace of his charming daughter.

When I had concluded, the captain, to my ſurpriſe, inſtead of betraying the leaſt chagrin or diſpleaſure at the diſcovery of the reciprocal attachment between his daughter and Theodore, told me, that he could not diſcern the leaſt reaſon why it ſhould be injurious to either: 'If they love 'each other other, why, my dear 'friend,' ſaid he, 'ſhould we prevent 'their happineſs? The virtues and ac-'compliſhments of your ſon will, I 'am perſuaded, more than counter-

'balance

'balance the trifling advantage which 'fortune has given to Juliana.'

I was aſtoniſhed at this uncommon inſtance of generoſity. 'Theſe,' ſaid I to myſelf, 'are the warm effuſions 'of an heart uncorrupted by the for-'did maxims of the world!'

I flew immediately to communicate the joyful tidings to my beloved Theodore; but will not attempt to deſcribe his tranſports. The happineſs of his amiable miſtreſs was not leſs complete; her lips, now with pride, confeſſed the paſſion her heart had long cheriſhed.

The hours were revolving in this uninterrupted courſe of tranquillity; when the generous Seamore was called to England by the death of a friend; who had appointed him ſole guardian

to

to an only child. He had, indeed, for ſome time before meditated a return to the place of his nativity; but this event haſtened his reſolution. We were to accompany him; and, at the requeſt of Juliana, her nuptials with Theodore were to be deferred till our arrival in England.

In a ſhort period we began our voyage, and ſailed for ſome weeks without interruption; when a ſtorm ariſing, we were in great danger of falling victims to its rage: our veſſel continued two days at the mercy of the tremendous hurricane; but at the cloſe of the ſecond, when the loud billows began to ſink in peace, and ſerenity again to ſmile on the agitated deep, we perceived that a part of the ſhip had taken fire.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the horror, the conſternation, and unſpeakable anguiſh, which was variouſly pictured in the countenances of the wretched crew. Our only reſource was that of the long boat, which was immediately hoiſted and filled. Our noble friend, with the commander of the veſſel, had been for ſome time endeavouring to extinguiſh the flames; but finding every effort fruitleſs, he turned his whole thoughts on his daughter, and was approaching to convey her into the boat, when the flames, which had communicated themſelves to that part of the ſhip on which he ſtood, compelled him to ſeek inſtant protection in the waves. Juliana, who had till now ſupported herſelf with fortitude, ſuperior to her age or

ſex,

ſex; on beholding the dire fate of her father, fainted in her lover's arms. I perceived the contending paſſions which agitated the ſoul of my Theodore: duty and love at once divided his affections. I entreated him to waſte no time on me, but inſtantly to convey the afflicted maid into the boat. This requeſt he complied with, thinking, when he had placed her in ſafety, to return and provide for mine and his own: but, alas! he was no ſooner in it, than the ſailors puſhed off from the ſhip, declaring that if more were ſuffered to enter, the boat muſt inevitably be overſet.

My Theodore, in the moſt pathetic manner, endeavoured to prevail upon them to take me with them, offering to truſt his own life to the mercy of the

the waves: our friend likewiſe, whom we had before the happineſs of ſeeing preſerved, by the timely interpoſition of the ſailors, urged this requeſt in vain; and thus every hope for my eſcape ſeemed cut off.

The grief which ſpoke in the countenance of my Theodore, on perceiving the boat row from the ſhip, is inexpreſſible. But what was my aſtoniſhment when I beheld the affectionate youth plunge into the waves, and ſwim back towards the veſſel! I loſt all thought of my own ſituation, wholly abſorbed in the fate of one dearer to me than life. I conjured him, in accents incoherent, to return to the boat, and not let me die a death more painful than that which awaited me, by ſeeing him periſh. He was, however, deaf to my

my remonſtrances; and when he had ſwam within a few yards of the veſſel, at his requeſt I threw myſelf from the deck: as I fell, with one hand he caught a part of my garment, by which he for ſome time ſupported me amidſt the ſurrounding waves. But his ſtrength being at length exhauſted, we were on the point of ſinking, when providentially we were diſcovered and taken up by ſome fiſhermen in a ſmall ſkiff.

As ſoon as we were ſet on ſhore, our care was to make the ſtricteſt inquiry after our friend and his lovely daughter, whom we flattered ourſelves had eſcaped in ſafety to ſome part of the coaſt. Our hopes were, alas! diſappointed; our endeavours to diſcover them proved fruitleſs; and at length we heard, with unutterable grief, that a boat full of paſ-

ſengers, which appeared to be eſcaping from ſome wreck, was ſeen to overſet; by which means the unfortunate crew muſt inevitably have periſhed. This, it is too probable, was that in which our lamented friends took refuge. Theodore's grief was ſevere beyond conception. We reſolved, however, to ſail for England; for which place we were certain, ſhould our fears prove groundleſs, they would likewiſe embark.

Fortunately, I had preſence of mind, before we left the ſhip, to ſecure twenty guineas in a handkerchief; with the aſſiſtance of which we procured our paſſage, and arrived at Portſmouth: but this, at the concluſion of our voyage, was reduced to two guineas; with which we reſolved to travel by ſhort ſtages to London, where we might, from ſome

of

of their connections, either gain intelligence of our unfortunate friends, or, what was more probable, be ourſelves the meſſengers of their ſad cataſtrophe.

We began our journey; but at the end of three days, notwithſtanding the moſt rigid economy, our caſh was entirely exhauſted. I leave you, Madam, whoſe heart wealth cannot ſteel againſt the ſympathetic feelings of woe, to imagine the horrors of our ſituation, deſtitute of friends or money, in a land of ſtrangers, and deprived even of a ſheltering habitation, in which we might unmoleſted breathe our laſt ſigh.

In this forlorn ſtate we continued our way, till I became ſo weak, that I found it impoſſible to proceed further: I doubted not but my laſt hour was at hand; death ſeemed to promiſe a ſpeedy

oblivion to all my cares; but it required more than human fortitude to ſupport the ſtroke which ſevered me from my Theodore, whom filial tenderneſs had rendered dearer to me than the tie of nature.

The thought of leaving him friendleſs, expoſed to want and ſorrow, filled my ſoul with thoſe tortures which the moſt agonizing diſſolution could not have cauſed. I ſwooned in his arms; and was conveyed, by the diſtracted youth, into that field in which our miſeries firſt excited your generous compaſſion.

'Alas!' ſaid Mrs. Sedley, as the narrative concluded, 'how unequal are the 'diſtributions of Providence! Surely, my 'dear unfortunate friend, a larger por-'tion of human ills than uſual have im-

'bittered

'bittered thy life. Whence is it, that 'the heart, warmed and expanded by 'the ſocial virtues, ſhould be thus ſuf-'fered to ſhrink at the touch of poverty? 'Methinks it militates againſt the laws 'of juſtice; and nothing but the certainty 'of a future ſtate can reconcile us to it.'

'It ill becomes us,' replied the Creole, 'to arraign the diſpenſations of the moſt 'High: adverſity is the lot of man, de-'ſigned by Heaven to wean him from 'theſe tranſient ſcenes, and fix his 'hopes on bliſs more permanent; without 'it the virtues of patience and reſigna-'tion would have no exiſtence.'

'How amiable, how forcible, is your 'philoſophy!' ſaid Mrs. Sedly: 'if you, my 'friend, encompaſſed by ſorrows and miſ-'fortune, can repreſs the ſigh of accuſa-'tion, how ought my heart to dilate with

'gratitude for the happineſs I enjoy, poſ-
'ſeſſed of an affluent fortune, and bleſſed
'in the affections of a man whoſe virtues
'render him the delight and admiration
'of all around him! Oh, Mrs. Groveby!
'were you but acquainted with his amia-
'ble qualities, how would your tongue,
'like mine, grow laviſh in his praiſe!'
Mr. Sedley had been for ſome weeks on a party of pleaſure; the ſtrangers, therefore, had not yet had an opportunity of ſeeing him; but, from the lively picture which his fond wife drew, they already viewed him with the higheſt admiration.

His return was now expected daily; and the impatient Harriot began affectionately to count the moments of his delay.

At length ſhe had the joy of ſeeing the chaiſe approach. Mrs. Groveby

by and her ſon, conſcious of the delicacy of their ſituation, retired to another part of the houſe, while their generous benefactreſs flew on the wings of love to welcome her huſband. How, alas! were her joys blaſted, when ſhe perceived him borne into the hall, pale and fainting. Severe as this ſhock was, ſhe endeavoured to ſupport it with fortitude, leſt any tender attention to her unfortunate huſband, who had been wounded in a duel, ſhould be omitted.

She attended him to his chamber, and hung over him with unutterable grief. When a ſurgeon had examined the wound, he pronounced it to be mortal; and adviſed him, if he had any temporal affairs to ſettle, to loſe no time in adjuſting them. Mrs. Sedley

Sedley was no ſooner acquainted with this melancholy ſentence, than ſhe fainted; and was conveyed by her attendants into another apartment, where the amiable Creole, by participating her ſorrows, endeavouring to alleviate them.

Her anxiety, however, did not ſuffer her to remain long abſent from her huſband, from whom ſhe feared death would in a ſhort period divide her for ever. When Sedley perceived her again enter the chamber, he made ſigns for the ſervants to leave the room; and, preſſing her hand, ſpoke to her in the following manner.

I Find, my dear Harriot, (ſaid he) that I am haſtening to eternity;

" cut

" cut off even with the bloſſoms of my ſins:"

I have, perhaps, but a few ſhort hours to live; let me therefore employ them, by atoning, in ſome meaſure, for my paſt offences, by vindicating the innocent, and making what reparation is yet in my power to thoſe I have injured.

I had not been many hours at Dover, at which place we propoſed ſtaying ſome days, before the packet-boat arrived from France: I, with many others, flocked to the beech, in order to view the paſſengers; (fatal curioſity!) among whom was a young woman of exquiſite beauty: ſhe walked from the boat with a melancholy, dejected air, leaning on the arm of an old man, whom I imagined to be her father.

I will

I will frankly confeſs, that from the firſt moment of beholding her, I was captivated by her charms; and reſolved, contrary to all laws of honour and humanity, to gratify my baſe deſires.

I found little difficulty in introducing myſelf to their acquaintance, as they ſlept in the ſame inn at which I lodged; and diſcovered, that they were on their way to London, but that they did not intend to purſue their journey till they received letters, which they were hourly in expectation of. I was rejoiced at this information, as I thought it would give me time to ingratiate myſelf with my fair enſlaver, with whom I became more and more enamoured. In a few days they received the letters they expected, and prepared to renew their journey.

journey. Unwilling ſo ſoon to relinquiſh the object of my purſuit, I pretended buſineſs, and accompanied them to London. There I took every opportunity of pleading my paſſion to my fair miſtreſs; but ſhe continued inflexible and unmoved.

I as obſtinately continued to purſue her; till, after repeated remonſtrances, ſhe was conſtrained to free herſelf from my importunities, by diſcovering my baſe deſigns to her father.

The unſuſpecting captain, who imagined the hearts of all men as generous and unpolluted as his own, was fired with indignation at the treachery and diſſimulation of my conduct. He reproached me in the moſt bitter language his honeſt reſentment could dictate; which I retorted with equal,

if

if not ſuperior aſperity, till a challenge ſeemed the only alternative to appeaſe the injured pride and honour of both.

We went immediately to a retired part of the town, and drew upon each other; but were ſoon interrupted by ſome people, who overheard the diſpute, and ſuſpected our deſign: they did not, however, arrive before I had received the wound, which will in a ſhort time terminate my exiſtence.

My antagoniſt was taken into cuſtody; and I was conveyed to an adjacent tavern, where a ſurgeon being arrived, pronounced my wounds to be dangerous.

I was no ſooner acquainted with his opinion, than I determined, contrary to the humane perſuaſions of thoſe around me, to be inſtantly conveyed

veyed home, for, alas! I had wounds of the ſoul, which wanted the hand of conjugal fidelity to heal.

Oh! Harriot, bear witneſs, when I am no more, that with my lateſt breath I acknowledge myſelf the aggreſſor, and from my ſoul acquit my noble friend.

Into what an abyſs of grief has not my folly plunged him! What pangs does not his amiable daughter ſuffer from reflecting, that the mercileſs hand of juſtice will, perhaps, tear from her the tendereſt of parents!

Suffer them not to languiſh under the cruel thought; ſend them inſtant intelligence, that I confeſs the juſtice of my doom, and pronounce the innocence of my friend.

Mrs. Sedley loſt no time in executing the deſires of her huſband; ſhe immediately diſpatched Theodore to the unfortunate captain, and likewiſe letters to ſome powerful friends, requeſting their intereſt to procure his ſpeedy enlargement.

After this, ſhe returned overwhelmed with ſorrow to the chamber of her huſband, whom ſhe endeavoured to conſole with the hopes of returning health.

'No,' ſaid he, 'my hour is at hand;' I ſhall ſoon appear at that grand tribunal, where our actions are weighed in the balance of impartial juſtice; where guilt is ſeen in its native deformity, and where virtue brightens into perfection. Oh! that I had reflected on this e'er it had been too late; but, intoxicated with ſucceſs, I forgot

that

that I was mortal, and darkened thoſe hours with vice, which heaven deſigned that virtue ſhould illumine.

Oh! Harriot, liſten, while I unfold a tale, at which your gentle nature will recoil.

It was the will of heaven not to increaſe the native pride and vanity which I poſſeſſed, by giving me an illuſtrious birth; my ſire, being diſtinguiſhed only by honeſty of heart, and ſimplicity of manners.

He reſided many years in the family of a man of high rank, who intruſted him with the management of his eſtates, in which he acquitted himſelf with unblemiſhed integrity. Being frequently with my father, I was early introduced to the notice of his noble patron; who was ſo pleaſed

with the vivacity and pliability of my temper, that he offered to educate me with his own ſon. This propoſal was too advantageous to be rejected, and I was immediately taken under his protection. A few months after he had adopted me, our generous friend accepted a lucrative poſt in America, to which place we accompanied him. There I made a rapid progreſs in my ſtudies, and arrived at my nineteenth year. My kind patron then began to think of procuring me ſome employment ſuitable to the education he had liberally beſtowed on me; and was on the point of purchaſing for me a commiſſion in the army, when a paralytic ſtroke in a few weeks put an end to his exiſtence. All

All my ſhining proſpects now vaniſhed; for I had but faint hopes of protection from the ſon of my benefactor, who by no means inherited his father's virtues.

My patron was no ſooner dead, than his heir threw off the guiſe of friendſhip, which he had till then worn, and gave me to underſtand, that I muſt no longer expect countenance or protection from him, but inſtantly ſeek another reſidence.

I was much hurt and chagrined at this treatment from one whom I was conſcious I had never deliberately injured. I had, indeed, always ſuſpected that he entertained no real eſteem for me; and was ſenſible that he viewed my acquirements with an invidious and malignant eye; but did not ima-

gine him capable, ſo ſoon, of violating the laws of hoſpitality. Fortunately for me, my father, who expired a few months before, had left me poſſeſſed of one hundred pounds, with which I reſolved to embark for the Weſt Indies, where I flattered myſelf I might obtain ſome advantageous employment, as I knew I could be well recommended to perſons of rank there.

I immediately proceeded to put this ſcheme into execution, and agreed for my paſſage in a veſſel, which was to ſail in a few weeks.

During this fatal period, the ſhip arrived from England which conveyed you, my Harriot, ſupreme in youthful beauty, to the American ſhore. I gazed—I loved! my whole ſoul was loſt in ſpeechleſs admiration! With faltering

faltering accents I inquired into your name and family; and, oh! with torture, heard that fortune had placed you far, far beyond the reach of my romantic hopes.

I frequented all places of public reſort, where I had the leaſt opportunity of ſeeing you; and frequently attempted to converſe with you; but, as you were conſtantly attended by your father or ſome friend, my endeavours were fruſtrated.

The time of my departure at length drew nigh: I was on the brink of exiling myſelf for ever from the woman on whom my ſoul doated with the moſt extravagant fondneſs: and yet, to what purpoſe would have been further delay?

Could

Could an obſcure youth, undiſtinguiſhed by birth or fortune, dare to aſpire to the heireſs of Sir Charles Saville? What madneſs! what preſumption!

In this agitated frame of mind, I embarked for the Weſt Indies; but, on my arrival there, underſtood that a generous and wealthy planter, to whom I had letters of recommendation, was lately deceaſed.

I introduced myſelf, however, to his daughter, who received me politely; and, with an air of amiable frankneſs, gave me free acceſs to her elegant manſion. She was a young woman who poſſeſſed one of the largeſt fortunes in the iſland; but, unlike the generality of her ſex, ſhe ſecluded herſelf from the exceſs and folly to which

which wealth too frequently gives birth.

I had not been her gueſt long, before I obſerved that ſhe grew thoughtful; and after ſome time diſcovered, that her heart was impreſſed by the moſt tender paſſion, of which I believed myſelf to be the object: her looks, her actions, her ſighs betrayed that which her modeſty ſtrove in vain to conceal.

This was, at firſt, far from affording me ſatisfaction; for, my whole ſoul being engaged by the charming image of my Harriot, I viewed all other women with contempt and indifference. Conſcious, however, of the extravagance of my paſſion, and not wholly inſenſible to the advantages ariſing from an alliance with the amiable Creole, I endeavoured to oppoſe the

the cool arguments of reaſon and intereſt to the impetuoſity of love; and, at length, acquired ſo far an aſcendency over my paſſion, that I reſolved to take advantage of the partiality which Zemira entertained for me. I eaſily perſuaded her that our affection was mutual; ſo eagerly do we graſp at the illuſion we ardently wiſh to be real! and in a few months led her to the altar, and made her mine by the moſt ſolemn ties.

In the ſociety of my amiable wife, I now endeavoured to forget thoſe fatal charms, the remembrance of which had ſo long embittered my hours; for oh! to my confuſion, I muſt acknowledge ſhe poſſeſſed ſweetneſs of temper, underſtanding, and accompliſhments, ſufficient to have made even the moſt capricious

capricious of our ſex completely happy. We ſpent two years together in one tranquil ſcene of domeſtic quiet, when I accidentally received information that you, my Harriot, ſtill continued ſingle and diſengaged.

Trivial as this circumſtance may appear, it revived that fatal paſſion, which time had almoſt extinguiſhed; and thoſe charms, on which I had gazed before with admiration, were now rendered more reſiſtleſs by the powerful magic of fancy. The ſociety of my Zemira grew every hour leſs pleaſing; my exiſtence became inſufferable, and at length I formed and executed the moſt villainous deſign that ever diſgraced the heart of man.

My fond wife had, on the day of our marriage, generouſly preſented me with

with deeds and writings, which inveſted me with unlimited power over that wealth which ſhe abundantly poſſeſſed: with theſe, dead to every feeling of juſtice, honour, or humanity, I embarked ſecretly for America; leaving my unſuſpecting Zemira, with her infant ſon, expoſed to all the horrors of indigence and deſpair. What agonizing pangs do not the reflection now coſt me! What worlds would I not give to conſign that one baſe action to the depths of oblivion!

At America, to elude all inquiries which might be made after me, I changed my name from Groveby to that of Sedley.

'Groveby!' exclaimed Mrs. Sedley; 'then indeed my conjectures were but 'too well founded!'

From

From America, (continued the expiring man) I ſailed for England; where I heard that you, my Harriot, reſided: and ſoon after my arrival, by the power of that wealth I ſo unjuſtly poſſeſſed, obtained the permiſſion of your guardian to addreſs you. What followed I need not add: my paſſion was not unſucceſsful; and in a few months I was happy in making you mine by the ſtrongeſt of all human engagements.

'How will it ſurprize you,' replied Mrs. Sedley, 'to find that I am no ſtranger 'to the unfortunate Zemira! though 'I little imagined myſelf ſo nearly inte-'reſted in her ſorrows.' She then related, in a few words, the melancholy circumſtances in which ſhe diſcovered the amiable Creole; and concluded with

aſſuring him that ſhe was at that moment in the houſe.

Sedley raiſed his eyes to heaven with aſtoniſhment and admiration; and, having remained ſilent a few minutes, ſaid that he would endeavour to ſummon fortitude to ſupport an interview with his much-injured wife.

The gentle Harriot then left the apartment of her huſband, and went into her own dreſſing-room, to communicate the diſcovery to her friend. She found her ſo deeply engaged in the contemplation of a gold chain which ſhe had taken from the table, that ſhe did not at firſt perceive the entrance of her benefactreſs; and when ſhe looked up, her countenance was ſo viſibly diſcompoſed, that, agitated as her own mind was, Mrs. Sedley could not forbear obſerving it, and inquiring into the cauſe.

'Alas,

'Alas, Madam!' replied ſhe, 'it is 'not now a time to intrude my ſorrows 'on you. Only tell me, I conjure you, 'by what means you became poſſeſſed 'of this chain? for, oh! it is the ſame 'which, on our nuptial day, I gave to 'my perfidious Groveby!'

'Prepare yourſelf,' ſaid Mrs. Sedley, embracing her tenderly, 'for tidings 'the moſt diſtreſſing and ſevere, for a 'ſcene of woe in which we are mutually 'involved! Oh! my friend, I am the 'wretched, though innocent cauſe of your 'ſufferings! How ſhall I utter it; how will 'your generous nature bear the thought, 'that, Groveby and Sedley are but one! 'The ſtory is long; and but an hour paſt 'I was bleſſed with ignorance. But let 'us not waſte the precious moments; the 'expiring Groveby waits for you with

'impatience, to receive his laſt repent-
'ant ſigh!'

The Creole, who to the ſofteſt ſenſibility united a dignity of mind, which enabled her to meet with fortitude the ſevereſt ſhocks of fortune, followed her friend into the chamber of her expiring huſband.

On her entrance, notwithſtanding he had endeavoured to prepare himſelf for the melancholy interview, it was with the utmoſt difficulty he was prevented from fainting; while his injured and compaſſionate wife, kneeling at his bedſide, bedewed his hand with tears of pity and forgiveneſs. Having gazed on her for ſome time, 'Juſtice,' ſaid he, 'has at
'length overtaken me!—Thy wrongs,
'Zemira, will be revenged: death ap-
'proaches, armed with the keen arrows
'of

'of guilt, to ſink my deſpairing ſoul 'into everlaſting anguiſh!'

Zemira could interrupt him but with tears.

'Oh, thou injured ſaint!' continued he, 'this goodneſs overpowers me. How 'much better could I have borne the 'keeneſt reproaches! they could not thus 'have pierced my ſoul! Canſt thou 'indeed forgive? canſt thou forget?'

Here the agitation of his ſpirits became ſo violent, that he was unable for ſome minutes to proceed. He then reſumed: 'I find that life is ebbing apace: 'adieu, my much-injured Zemira! You 'will find I have made you what repara-'tion was in my power, by reſtoring that 'wealth of which I ſo unjuſtly deprived 'you.

'Farewel, my Harriot! I am on the 'verge of eternity.

'How dreadful is the proſpect! And 'yet a ray of hope illumines the dreary 'path: unbounded is the mercy of 'heaven!—Tell Theodore——' Death cloſed the period: he fell back in a ſwoon; and in a few minutes after expired.

Mrs. Sedley gave way to all the extravagance of unreſtrained grief; but the Creole, familiarized to ſorrow, beheld the corpſe of her repentant huſband with an uncommon firmneſs of mind: 'When I 'look back,' ſaid ſhe,

"When I look back on all my former days,
"The only comfort the review affords,
"Is that they're paſt.
"For thro' their courſe I cannot recollect
"One free from ſorrow, guilt, or diſap-
"pointment."

Theodore,

Theodore, who was, at the requeſt of Sedley, diſpatched to his unfortunate antagoniſt, arrived in a ſhort time at the place of his confinement. But here let me drop my pen, nor attempt to deſcribe his emotions: on his entrance he diſcovered Seamore, and his beloved Juliana!

Overpowered by ſurprize and joy, at beholding the dear youth whom ſhe imagined death had for ever torn from her embraces, ſhe fainted in the arms of her lover: his careſſes, however, ſoon recalled her fleeting ſpirits; and her happineſs was rendered complete by the aſſurance he gave her of her father's ſafety, and likewiſe that of his amiable mother. In return, Seamore informed him, that the boat in which they eſcaped was driven by adverſe winds on the coaſt of France; and recited their adventure

with

with Sedley, at Dover; of which Theodore had before but imperfectly heard. The duteous youth did not long indulge himself in the society of his Juliana; impatient for his mother to participate in his joy, he lost no time in bearing to her the happy tidings; and with astonishment was made acquainted with the reverse of fortune which had taken place during his absence.

The generous Creole, who rejoiced that it was now in her power to recompense the filial piety of her beloved son, instantly put into his possession that wealth which his repentant father had resigned, reserving only to herself a moderate income.

Seamore was in a few weeks honourably acquitted; and increased their happiness by his presence at Sedley Hall;

where

where the nuptials of the enraptured Theodore with his Juliana were celebrated.

The amiable Creole ſpent the evening of her days in peace; and, in an uninterrupted ſcene of tranquillity, loſt the remembrance of thoſe ſorrows which had diſcoloured the former part of her life. She preſerved the moſt inviolate friendſhip for Mrs. Sedley; who at her death, having no relations, bequeathed to her friend the whole of her fortune; which being conſiderable, enabled the generous Zemira to exerciſe, in a more extenſive degree, that benevolence of ſoul for which ſhe was ſo eminently characterized.

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM